VOICES·OF·TO-DAY

STUDIES·OF·REPRESENTATIVE MODERN·PREACHERS

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VOICES OF TO-DAY

STUDIES OF

Representative Modern Preachers

BY

HUGH SINCLAIR

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TO

MY FATHER

PREFACE

THE late H. R. Haweis used to say that the persistence of preaching is a conspicuous illustration of the law of the survival of the fittest ; if preaching could have been killed, it would have been killed long ago by the thousands of imbecile sermons that have been poured from countless pulpits throughout the ages of the Church. In his day the young, bold spirits of a rebellious century were clamorously contending that preaching was an effete institution. In ours we look back upon the latter half of the nineteenth century as upon the palmy days of preaching, and gloomily assert that the power of the pulpit is on the wane. So the magic of the enchanted distance weaves a royal robe out of the threadbare rags of each succeeding age.

But preaching has always justified itself. Bad preaching cannot kill the ordinance of the spoken word, criticism cannot improve it out of existence, the spread of education and of popular literature cannot supersede it. Through all the ages it is the word made flesh that prevails, and all the world's great books cannot eclipse the living voice. In the course of a long experience as a hearer, during which I had occasion to study every possible type and manner of preaching, it has been borne in upon me with increasing force of conviction that the pulpit, so far from being in

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a condition of decay, is entering upon a new and higher phase of its development. The very forces which are supposed to be its deadliest foes, namely, the spread of popular education and emancipation from external authority and conventional religion, are its best friends ; for in depriving the pulpit essayist or lecturer of his *raison d'être,* they are giving the prophet and the witness—the man with a message—his supreme opportunity. Preachers everywhere are beginning to realise that the pulpit is doomed unless it can bring to men a message so unique and specific, so inward and intimate, as to have no rival in any other movement or cult, and that such a message is found only in the Christian Evangel.

In this book I have endeavoured to present portraits of preachers representative of widely varying schools and tendencies, who, each in his own way, are making some vital and characteristic contribution to the corporate message of the pulpit. Many of these are new forces whose emergence is a powerfully formative element in the shaping of the modern pulpit ; a few have held the field these many years, but are still looking towards the sunrise, bringing a young, fresh-hearted understanding to new problems and situations. While I may claim a fully representative character for the selection, some preachers whom it was my desire to include had to be reluctantly omitted, owing to lack of opportunity of hearing them.

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON,

September, 1912.

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND

I

The Right Rev. CHARLES GORE
D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.
BISHOP OF OXFORD

Dr. Gore is something of an enigma to many. He seems to combine two attitudes and tempers which the average man cannot "think together"—a rarefied and cloistered spirituality and a doggedly practical passion for social revolution. Both the detached visionary and the purely social reformer find themselves in consonance with him, and both find cause for quarrel in him, as both find support and antagonism in his divine Master; it is hard, indeed, to convince the man who has fastened upon a single line that it takes more than one thing to make a true unity. And thus one man will chide Bishop Gore for diluting the stream of his spirituality with the concern for the material welfare of man, while another will deem it a sore pity that so genuine a socialist should mar his sympathy with the democratic ideal by what he would term a morbid streak of other-worldliness. It was ever thus. When Jesus refused to let a man bury his own father before following Him, He was reproached with an inhuman spirituality; when He put the healing of a man before the keeping of the Sabbath, He was counted a bidder for the people's vote rather than a servant of God. The man of one-sided passion can always be sure of a party at his heels; the full-orbed prophet of the Highest gets

little response from the children of the market-place, whether he pipes or mourns.

Listen to Bishop Gore as he crashes into the sterile religiosities and callous respectabilities of the modern Church. He is in his most severely ethical and denunciatory mood. He asks Churchmen what the Church is about, to stand by and see the people crushed in body and soul by iniquitous social conditions. He asks them what their devotion to the Sacrament is worth if it does not sting them out of their brutish dulness to the misery of their brethren around them. They are only too ready to ape the old parrot-cry that Christ was not a social reformer. "Not a social reformer?" he echoes in vibrant indignation. "If He were to come into our churches and say what He said about poverty and wealth, what would happen? . . . People would not call it social reform, but something a great deal worse. . . . You say He was not a social reformer? What did He do? He founded the Church—the brotherhood. If you say to me, 'I don't want to go mixing up with your dirty politics; I want to follow pure religion,' I say, 'Go and do it'; that is the most revolutionary thing you can do; that is what turned the world upside down."[1] The sincere, earnest voice matches the blunt, unequivocal words. Nothing could be more forthright, nothing less conventionally religious. Keir Hardie might have said it. A Labour crowd would have cheered it to the echo.

Listen to him again. He is conducting the Three Hours' Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. A solemn

[1] In his speech before the Christian Social Union, delivered at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on February 1, 1912.

hymn has been sung without musical accompaniment. A devout congregation, dressed in sombre hue, is waiting for him to begin the first of his seven fifteen-minute sermonettes on the Words from the Cross. They look with sharp expectancy at the sad and somewhat dreamy face in the pulpit. He has preached in London long enough to be known as one who "preaches his heart out"; behind his quiet and somewhat academic manner there is a wonderfully real self-communication, a wonderfully vivid sympathy with his hearers which makes every word quick and palpitant. At last his eyes open, and beneath their stillness one catches the flicker of that interior light which is the spiritual life of men. If one happens to have known him hitherto only as the trenchant prophet of social righteousness, or as the Episcopos whose diocese is the whole of human life, it seems now as if a veil had been withdrawn, and that for the first time one is looking deep into his real world, the mysterious and profound world of instant communion with God.

A deeper glance reveals a certain aloofness which has nothing in common with the *odi-profanum-vulgus* attitude. "Withdrawn" is the right word. There is something about this most unofficial and humble-minded of men which has snatched him from the sunny meadows of life into a solitary region where wild beasts and angels keep the sons of God mysterious company. A sense of dedication, of priesthood, of invincible virginity of soul grows upon one with every moment. Dr. Gore is an ascetic, and an ascetic of that convincingly authentic type which impels the man who has hitherto sneered at "mediæval perversions of Christianity" to wonder "if there isn't

something in it after all.'' We of to-day are so sure that the only legitimate type of Christianity is that which counts all things lawful, that we are disconcerted when a man stands in our path who frankly tells us that not all things are expedient, and that there are some to whom, in St. Augustine's phrase, '' God has counselled better things than He has permitted.'' The convenient word '' Romanism '' slips readily to our tongue, and we find it easy to forget that it was not priest or pope who told us that if any man can receive this hard saying concerning spiritual vocation we are to let him receive it. Such men as Dr. Gore are salutary reminders to a slack generation that Jesus cannot be loved with impunity, and that some are still called to renunciations and crucifixions such as only the Lord of Gethsemane and Calvary can demand. Yet Dr. Gore has not the look of one to whom such surrender comes hard; he is rather a natural ascetic, whose soul always sat lightly to even the simplest amenities of life, and to whom a straight rule is a well-fitting yoke which makes light work of life's burden. One remembers how at the age of fifteen he heard a sermon by Dr. Westcott on the need for a revival of community life, and how his untried boyish soul leapt up to the ideal as the wave leaps up to the oar. It was then that the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield was born in the mind of this youthful priest. And it is significant that he did not allow his translation to Westminster to absolve him from his vows. Sharing his little rooms in the Cloisters with two or three other clergymen, he lived a simple religious community life.

Now he begins to speak, simply, earnestly, pointedly, without a trace of official assumption, without rhetoric, aplomb, or purple patches. Nothing could be less pretentious, yet it comes with a strangely thrilling quality. It is not only the vital impact of a pure and potent personality; it is still more the convincing consciousness of authority behind the words—an authority that makes no show, nor clamours for recognition, but is irrefutably self-evidencing and self-authenticated. Even in these devotional Good Friday addresses the teacher is in evidence. Dr. Gore has the prime qualification of a great teacher: humility. He unconcernedly repeats the same thing over and over again, so be it that he can fix it upon intellect and memory; not caring though he were accused of boresome reiteration, not for a moment feeling that he needs to offer an apology for his repetitions. He is there not to strain after novelty or to display a brilliant tongue, but to bring his message home to dull and groping minds. That is all he cares for, his only pride and ambition. He is intensely sure of the absolute truth of what he says, and passionately anxious that his hearers should understand and recognise it. It is this single-minded humility that lends a power and charm to his utterance which mere scholarship or intellectual force could not give, and invests it with a dignity which commands reverence.

He sums up the seven messages he is about to deliver in seven simple words: awakening, conversion, work, endurance, enthusiasm, thoroughness, and preparation for death. His unreserved earnestness and unconventional manner are almost Methodist in their vivacious freedom. He is frankly colloquial,

uses an abundance of gesture, and takes pains to get into sympathy with his audience. Sometimes earnestness merges into passion. Then he gives his voice free rein, and the great spaces are filled with plangent sound. He prefaces his sermonettes by a simple, bold, telling word-picture of the Crucifixion scene. His rigorous realism comes into full play. There is nothing of the sentimental prettifying or grandiose melodrama wherewith preachers of a more equivocal fibre invest the stern fact. In the most sober of language, he tells the people that there was nothing uncommon or "sacred" about the Crucifixion. It was a brutal, horrible fact, with no softening features. Briefly but unsparingly he describes the process of nailing the criminal to the cross, and dropping it into its socket. He reminds his congregation that the conventional presentations incorrectly depicted the crosses as raised high above the ground; in reality they were so low that the faces of the victims were almost on a level with the on-lookers, so that the mocking eyes of the reviler had their will of the reviled, and no glint of savagery or accent of scorn was lost upon the sufferer. Some fastidious souls might have deemed this dispassionate insistence upon ugly detail gratuitously harrowing and a little mediæval. But what with our prevalent tendency to smother the Cross beneath flowers of religious sentiment, or to allow it to be swallowed up by the Resurrection glory, it is well for us to be reminded once again what a mean and naked death it was that Christ tasted for every man.

Very simple are these Good Friday addresses of Bishop Gore's, and yet in them, rather than in the

magnificent Abbey sermons which won him pulpit fame, the secret of his power is revealed. One thinks of the ramified influences of his public activity; of his magnetic power over young men; his tremendous share in the awakening of the Christian social conscience; his large part in the liberation of theology from the shackles of traditionalism; and one sees the root and germ of it in his mystic union with a crucified Redeemer. Many wonder why reforming movements issuing from the rationalist side have such puny force and are so lightly quenched. It is because only one faith can overcome the world and regenerate the Church—the faith that can say, *Amor meus crucifixus est.*

II

The Right Rev. A. F. WINNINGTON-INGRAM D.D., LL.D.

BISHOP OF LONDON

When that grim old lion, Dr. Temple, was Bishop of London, he once had occasion to officiate in an ultra-ritualistic church. As the service proceeded, he suddenly caught sight of a little red-robed acolyte swinging a dainty censer. "Run away, little boy," he growled, in tones that could be heard all over the church; "run away, I don't want you." The story is not only characteristic of Dr. Temple, but hits off the essential difference between him and the present Bishop of London to a nicety. Had Bishop Winnington-Ingram been in his place he would have said nothing, not because he happens to be somewhat of a ritualist, but simply because he would have been so utterly absorbed in the service that he would never have known the boy was there at all.

This whole-hearted absorption in the moment is the secret of Dr. Winnington-Ingram's strength. He is "an enjoying soul," in the finest sense of the term. A fresh-hearted, unspoilt child-humanity is his. As he so often tells us, he enjoys every bit of his work, every moment of it. To watch him, whether at a Society function or in a solemn assembly, is a tonic. He makes as bright a spot in the drab, *blasé* atmosphere of the life of London as a brightly-painted omnibus in its mean grey streets. He brings

romance, adventure, sheer *gaieté de cœur* into the sophisticated complexity and strenuous routine of modern affairs. He is indeed an impressionist artist, not in the pulpit but in life. His is the genius of dipping both hands into the life-stuff, bringing up some apparently ephemeral and trivial fragment and glorifying it—" the instant made eternity." All life interests and absorbs him. He sees no incongruity in its fascinating juxtaposition of jest and earnest, shallowness and depth. Watch him at a dinner party talking to some exquisitely gowned *mondaine*. How he enjoys her rippling, frothy comments, her dainty hits at things and at people! Then suddenly, without any jerk or sense of embarrassment, a grave sweetness will creep into his jovial smile. He is talking in the most natural, the most *naïve* way, about " the grace of God." A narrow religionist, watching his eager abandonment to the pleasure of the moment, might write him down as " worldly." As a matter of fact, he is the least worldly of men—that is precisely why he need not affect unworldliness. He talks of mundane affairs in the easiest, most genial way imaginable, yet all the time it is clear for those who have eyes to see that they lie far outside his real life.

The Bishop of London! The title is appalling, crushing, to any man with sufficient imagination. What mere mortal can see London with a Bishop's eye and live? Does Dr. Winnington-Ingram ever tremble at the tremendousness of his charge? One pities him if he does; one pities him still more if he does not. Has he sufficient imagination to realise his Bishophood? Imagination he has, no doubt, of a

warm, sympathetic, human type. Had he the sterner imagination of the seer, the imagination of Him who beholding London weeps over it, enjoyment of his work would give place to a despairing paralysis, a heart-shattering pain. Yet he has something of the episcopal soul, and no man has a better claim to the office than he; no man has earned the title more honestly through long, self-sacrificing, loving-hearted work in London's meanest and vilest streets. How magnificently he earned it he told us himself all unconsciously some eleven years ago, when, as Bishop of Stepney, he stood up to denounce the water companies of East London. "I visited a dying girl," he said in the course of his speech, "on one of the hottest summer days. Everyone was out at work, the poor girl's lips were parched with thirst, and she was dying fast. I looked round for something to moisten her lips with, but there was no water in the house, and I had to go half a mile to where I lived and fetch some of the water we had stored ourselves from the early morning supply." So rare is Christianity in this pagan world of ours that Dr. Winnington-Ingram will be remembered by many long after he has passed as the Bishop who was willing to fetch and carry for half-a-mile through the streets of London to get a drop of water for a dying slum-girl.

He got his training in the East-end as Warden of Oxford House—perhaps the most truly brotherly of settlements. If there is a warden or worker of Oxford House who later on developed that unlovely disease called "side," I have yet to make his acquaintance, and Dr. Winnington-Ingram is the most fraternal of all that remarkable brotherhood. A delightful

"you're-as-good-as-me-ness" speaks out of every look of his. Whether it be a fellow-dignitary, or Dr. F. B. Meyer, or one of his East-end hooligan friends, there is the same comradely touch on the shoulder, the same cheery greeting and racy inquiries. He is one of the few Bishops who have taken habitual part in open-air preaching. At one time one could find him in Victoria Park Sunday after Sunday, cheek by jowl with atheists and secularists, charging up against crowds of working men, his straightforward bearing, ready wit, and imperturbable good-humour gaining him a fair hearing. He had a way with these crowds; every shrewd thrust and humorous sally told for all it was worth, and his sympathetic earnestness found its way to many a citadelled heart. He is essentially a man's man. His is that genial camaraderie which, perhaps, only the true priest has the secret of. His church in the East-end was crowded from first to last, and at his Saturday afternoon garden party that supposedly parson-hating animal, the non-church-going working man, was strongly in evidence. Small wonder that Dr. Winnington-Ingram never suffered from the pessimism which claims so many strenuous workers. His magnetic energy never failed to evoke the latent powers of those who worked under him; his strong and winning appeal opened the purses of the rich; his tact, wisdom and sympathy won the people. There were always good fellows to recruit any gaps in his ranks, always new people to interest in the work, and the work itself was the best fun in the world to this strenuous, zesty parson. Spare to tenuity, he never knew any illness worse than an occasional cold. That he had next to no time for

reading did not worry a man who valued life and action above books. So he stood, and stands, the most exuberantly optimistic Bishop that ever wore apron.

Yet Dr. Winnington-Ingram is no shallow cheerer-up, no mere smiler. The grim face of pain and sin has graven a deep reflection upon his mind, and his vivid sympathy forbids the superficial thing called happiness, though it only intensifies the deep thing called joy. As he looks over London he sees a wretchedness and defilement not to be borne but for the cleansing tide which flows from eyes whose tears have washed the feet of Christ. Very sensitive and generous is his social conscience. He has the tenderest of hearts for Jenny's case, and the most uncompromising scorn and condemnation for a society that refuses to bear its share of the blame. And in his attitude stern, practical reality and an honourable tenderness of sentiment which has no kinship with hysteria are intermingled. His is not the platform agitator's temper. If he does not hesitate to hurl biting words at the pew-lounging pharisee who has come prepared to hear a string of comfortable and harmless pulpit platitudes, his spirit expresses itself even more congenially and characteristically in some unobtrusive contribution to quiet, practical reform, or in the thoughtful brotherly kindness that prompts him to send a hamper of flowers from his garden to the Lock Hospital week by week.

Bishop Winnington-Ingram is not a great preacher. Great preaching cannot be come at amid a ceaseless whirl of affairs and by means of spasmodic attempts at preparation in motors and trains. But he is a dynamic preacher by sheer force of sympathy and perfect

naturalness. To look at him is to look at perpetual motion ; head, eyes, hands—nothing is still for a single moment, and one falls to wondering if they are quiet even in sleep. There is asceticism in the tense, large mouth ; indomitable purpose in the meeting of the thin lips ; earnest intention and appellant sympathy in his shrewd, alert eyes. His voice is harsh and easterly ; much open-air work has caused it to fray and crumble at the edges. He squares his jaw and flings out a careless torrent of words like a cartload of stones. Uncomfortably searching and practical words they are, every one of them. If the drowsy worshipper wants to nod he must nod outside ; sermon sleep is impossible under this tearing harrow of a preacher. There is no ecclesiastical formalism, his most solemn genuflection is the merest bobbing. His churchmanship may emerge in uncompromising anathemas against heresy and divorce ; to the upholstery of holiness he is at all times delightfully indifferent. Yet he is a churchman of the most rigid, authority-ridden type. Only he has somehow managed to translate official authority into spiritual power, and so the Methodist feels as much at home with the core of his preaching as the "highest" Anglican. He has taken the service of Christ more seriously than the service of an institution. And because he preaches Christ, not in the conventional, stereotyped sense, but in reality and in truth, and so appeals not to any individual communion, but to the universal Christian heart, he may, in a far more than formal and official sense, lay just claim to the stupendous honour of being the Bishop of London.

III

The Most Rev. COSMO GORDON LANG
D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

A MARKEDLY judicial balance and deliberation, which owe very little to training and experience but are as innate to him as his dark, steady eyes and his unvarying urbanity, are characteristic of this youngest of modern Archbishops. Perhaps the only startling and impulsive action of his life—and one suspects that even there the impulsiveness was more apparent than real—was done the day before his admission to the Bar, when he suddenly wired to have his name taken off the books, and, dedicating himself to the ministry of a Church that was not his by birth and nurture, was confirmed and entered the Theological College at Cuddesdon. That he would be as distinguished in the Church as he would have been at the Bar was a foregone conclusion with all who really knew him ; and a few less than kindly tongues predicted that so fine a talent for balancing opinions and finding a foothold on both sides of a question was marked out for the highest ecclesiastical honours.

The faculty of doing justice to two opposite views and its concomitant disability for partisanship undeniably form the keystone to Archbishop Lang's character. It emerges often in the most casual utterance ; it speaks in his tone and accent. It was this

strangely unyouthful quality of caution and breadth of view as much as his brilliancy which carried the unknown lad from Glasgow almost at a leap to the crest of Oxford popularity. Already at nineteen his fluency of speech was remarkable; he could speak gracefully and vigorously upon almost any subject at a moment's notice; but it was his constitutional avoidance of extremes that secured him unopposed election to the presidency of the Union—a privilege which falls to very few men indeed. Under his leadership the debates took on a certain weight and comprehensiveness quite uncharacteristic of undergraduate functions, and even the Canning Club developed not only interest but even considerable sympathy with labour and social movements. Young Lang was a pioneer in University settlement work, and had already looked poverty and unemployment in the face in East London. But his sense of the crying social evils, none the less keen and compassionate because of its reasoned, undemonstrative expression, was from the first tempered by an invincible vein of prudence and sober restraint, and by an ingrained respect for authority remarkable in one of his years.

Thus he stood as leader of the conservative party among the undergraduates. Very far from being a Tory, he was, indeed, more keenly and vitally alive to the cry of the people than many of those who shouted themselves hoarse in the service of democratic propaganda, but he held the balance with an almost inhumanly steady hand. And thus he stands to-day as Archbishop of York, the least clerical of prelates in the sense of having a quick and sympathetic understanding of the lay point of view, and the most

ecclesiastical after the modern Anglican standard, limited by the requirements of a situation in which it has become the chief business of a Bishop to hold the balance true between parties, and to sense with unfailing accuracy the bounds within which the Episcopate can exercise its authority to-day. Whether Archbishop Lang would have been a great ecclesiastic under the large freedom of the mediæval prelacy is doubtful. One rather thinks his temperament would have been too hesitant and also too bland for those crimson and purple days of the Church's temporal power, when even Reverend Fathers in God flashed back the truth they stood for from the grim mirror of the sword-blade. But in these days, when it is a question of reconcilement and scrupulous definition of boundaries, he succeeds as a past master in the art of making peace with honour. Some will have it that this broad, inclusive temperament is one that makes life easy and comfortable for its possessor. But this is not necessarily so. There is a sense in which it is easier for a man to be a partisan and suffer in the ardour of his enthusiasm than to stand by and endure not only the pressure of conflicting views upon his soul, but the disapproval of those who can see courage only in unhesitating surrender to a party. In this sense it may be said that not Luther but Erasmus was the martyr of the Reformation.

As a preacher Dr. Lang's dignified bearing, deep, rich voice, and limpid flow of eloquent language catch the attention from the start. As he goes on his gift of lucid statement intensified by his early legal training comes to the surface. Just as in the old Oxford days he took up the multiple and tangled threads of a turbid

debate and worked them into a clear definition of the situation, so to-day he takes this or that abstruse problem, and, depolarising it from its academic association, presents its essentials to the man in the street in the most direct and forceful language, and in a setting that puts it well within the context of his life. Add to this a certain magnetic quality and a real sympathy with common men, and you have preaching which, while entirely free from the official microbe, is "episcopal" in the Apostolic sense. The note of watchful responsibility is present even when he is at his freest and straightest. Supple of temperament, with a gift of being all things to all men, his utterance is nevertheless carefully equipoised and guarded. The note of compromise is not always absent; that of non-committal is often sounded. If he has a clear and faithful sense of his message, his eye is ever on the hour, and he does not believe in being instant out of season. He is definite and firm, but always sensible of the jibbing nature of the sermon-hearing animal. The pastoral instinct is very strongly marked. Although he is no longer a parish priest, one cannot hear him without realising that for him preaching is part of the cure of souls, and that it is as much a case of handling men as of handling a text. There is no very marked trace of the Scottish Presbyterian instinct for theology—a brief year's course at Cuddesdon did not go very deeply to strengthen any existing theological bent—and throughout his preaching the dual interest of ecclesiastical statesmanship and human sympathy eclipses the theological.

Although Dr. Lang's preaching is to-day mainly of a somewhat stately and reserved type dominated by

a strong sense of form, it has not lost the ground-note of a deep practical understanding of human nature. Like most Anglican prelates, he has served a thorough apprenticeship in the art of approaching all sorts and conditions of men. He has been assistant curate in the heart of the slum quarter of Leeds, and he has been vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford. He knows his way to the heart and confidence of classes of men which have nothing in common except their distrust of the conventional clergyman, such as the athletic and fashionable undergraduate set, and the lowest stratum of casual dossers in the slums. He can turn from a gathering of conservative and devout Church people to a Dockers' Union meeting, and carry both by the sheer magnetism of sympathy. To him fell the onerous task of succeeding so popular and characteristic a figure as Dr. Winnington-Ingram in the Bishopric of Stepney, and, addressing himself to it with his wonted judgment, tact and kindliness, he won all along the line, securing the admiration of priests and laity alike. He can record at least two fine triumphs in the art of winning men. The first was his extraordinary influence over the most unlikely sets of dons and undergraduates as vicar of St. Mary's; the second his capture of the heart of East London. One wonders which was the greater — to satisfy the fastidious and eclectic mind of the omniscient 'Varsity man and so find a way into his deeper confidence, or to satisfy an East-end constituency which had Bishop Winnington-Ingram for its idol and criterion. It is this grip upon men of the most widely varying types that gives magnetism and driving power to his utterance.

One often falls to wondering how a man so superlatively busy with administrative detail as Archbishop Lang is able to maintain so high a standard of preaching. With a large amount of "serving tables" to do all through his career, he never failed to attract crowds to his services not only at Oxford, but also at Portsea, where he had charge of a parish of forty thousand souls, with six churches, fourteen assistant clergy, and a bewildering network of subsidiary organisations. The inexhaustible freshness and fertility of his preaching at Portsea was the constant marvel of his friends, and its vigour and general excellence have remained undulled. The secret of it is given away in a little story, which tells how once, as a young undergraduate, he had got behindhand with his work, and read a philosophical essay to one of his tutors off a blank sheet of paper. No one would ever have been any the wiser had not the tutor asked him to repeat a particular sentence, and on his being unable to do so demanded to see the essay. A man who can do that before he is twenty can do almost any impossible thing one may care to mention. Yet he does not rely upon his almost miraculous fluency and readiness for his pulpit work, but evidences careful preparation in everything he says, some of his sermons giving the impression of having been written out word for word.

The son of a Presbyterian minister of the standard type of the Auld Kirk, Archbishop Lang was nurtured in a ripe and genial tradition which combined the warmth of a sane evangelicalism with the pleasant humanity of the best type of moderatism, and it was largely his manse training which, on the one hand,

made him peculiarly susceptible to the ecclesiastical influences of a university like Oxford and to the measured genius of the Church of England, and, on the other hand, saved him from the bitter bigotry of the renegade. While his love and zeal for the Church of his adoption are warm and strong, his finely balanced temper keeps him from extremes, and it was he of all prelates who led in advocating acquiescence in the will of the people as expressed by the Veto Bill. He has cast his lines in a communion which denies its leaders the opportunity of impressing themselves upon their Church as Rainy impressed himself upon his. His temperament precludes his taking a pioneering line in the reformation which is surely coming upon the Church of England. But in the shaking of things he will keep a firm hand upon the reins, and possibly pass down to history as one of those typically modern prelates whose only sins are sins of omission.

IV

The Very Rev. W. R. INGE, M.A., D.D.

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON

SOME years ago those of us who are interested in mysticism deplored the lack of anything like an informed and luminous English manual on the subject. We dreamt of the emergence of an English writer with a really profound and sympathetic understanding of mysticism; short of that, we hoped for one at least who would have sufficient insight and penetration for a brilliant and suggestive misunderstanding. Instead of either, Dr. Inge floated into the horizon with his neither greatly sympathetic nor luminously critical Bampton Lectures. At first sight the student of mysticism was inclined to have scant patience with a treatment which, after all, seldom got beyond the fringe of its subject; but soon interest supervened—interest not so much in the subject-matter as in the author. Here was an informed and able theologian entirely and impregnably satisfied with his ecclesiastical and dogmatic position. Not a shade of misgiving, not a hint of tentative balancing, not the ghost of a troubling suspicion that

> "They see not clearliest
> Who see all things clear;"

and yet the personality that spoke to us out of the sure, categorical pages of the Bampton Lectures had none of the repellent assumption of the mere dogmatist.

For one thing, Dr. Inge had clearly earned the right to his opinions by severe and strenuous thought. For another, a thread of the very mysticism he criticised shot through the sober web of his spiritual "make-up," giving it that perennially fascinating mixture of rationalism and spiritual immediacy so often found in modernists of whatever Church. Reading the lectures and listening to the Dean on later occasions, I was irresistibly reminded of a certain visit to the famous South Place Chapel, the centre of the Ethical Society. To my amazement the anthem on that occasion had been, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and, glancing at a notice paper during the singing, my sense of humour had been pricked by the sentence, "The object of this society is the cultivation of a *rational* religious sentiment." Something of the same sense of humorous yet subtly appealing incongruity haunts me whenever I listen to Dean Inge. His position is, one need not point out, continents removed from the arid moralism of the Ethical Society; yet it is rationalism, and rationalism set to the tune of "I know that my Redeemer liveth." It sets one's mind puzzling once again over that extraordinary bundle of antinomies they call human nature. And more specifically, it rouses a quick sympathy for the man of shrewd, dogmatic, fixed intellect who, when he has built himself an impregnable house wherein he might safely take his ease, turns aside at the threshold and slips through the stile of the religious imagination to gather moon-flowers betwixt dusk and dawn.

But of this shy yet inalienable affinity with the stars a first hearing of "the gloomy Dean" may

tell us little or nothing. What jumps to eye and mind is a very sober, dry-eyed, didactic personality. That straight, level, self-contained look makes no appeal. Those thin, inflexible lips seem made to set inferior folk right in no specially gentle terms, to show scant mercy in the use of logic or irony, to make little concession to dulness or ignorance. A certain aristocratic carelessness of being understood suggests the pagan philosopher rather than the Christian teacher. Carelessly he launches his clear, carrying voice into the great spaces of St. Paul's, as if trusting to the vaults and pillars to bear his message on, not greatly concerned if they do so or no. Carelessly he launches his thoughts upon the crowd, not solicitous either to justify himself or to mediate his teaching to the timid neophyte. He has not taken over-much time to explore that bewildering and irritating microcosm we call man ; he lacks the imaginative sympathy which enables a man to strip himself of his moral and religious prepossessions and to see the world through other folks' eyes. Before ever he has uttered a word against democracy one knows that he must antagonise it. He looks upon the blundering, groping manifestations of a young, blind movement towards a misconceived good with the cold, considering eye of the professional appraiser, whereas such half-born, inarticulate things can only be understood by the wisdom of a sympathy so vivid as to be almost substitutionary.

So the Dean of St. Paul's stands before us with his dry and biting speech, his unyielding way of approaching things, his formidable capacity for sarcasm, his somewhat alarming air of finality, and

his disconcerting gift of characterization. Even when he is most serene and peaceful there is a latent severity, the rumour of a bleak wind somewhere round the corner. A more than sensitive temper, likely to take the form of acute irritation, but kept well in control when the effective dealing of a blow depends upon coolness and precision, is in evidence. A turn for realism and bald veracity is not graced by the genius for speaking the truth in love, and comes dry and tart as green fruit. Always interesting, and frequently amusing with the pungent flavour of a sardonic humour, his abounding cleverness leaves a weight upon the spirit. Much of what he says impresses one as more able than mighty, more brilliant than moving. Even his specifically spiritual appeals—and all his appeals are essentially noble and grave—often fall short of the highest result. They leave us wiser rather than better, discontented rather than aspiring, dejected rather than repentant, lifted rather than saved. As he proceeds with his lucidly marshalled argument admiration increases. His intellectual qualities grow upon one. He stands with the great prophets of unpopular speech, heard gladly only by a select circle of educated souls. There is an unassertive and unconscious pride about his utterance. He does not shrink from popular disfavour for Christ's sake: what he cannot do is to be a fool for Christ's sake. His tongue will utter hard sayings regardless of consequences; it will not babble childish talk to infant souls. And there comes to one's mind a hard saying about the superiority of the least in that realm of divine foolishness which we call the Kingdom of God.

But suddenly, perhaps in the middle of an address, lecture, or sermon, there is an unveiling. The sheath of superficial habit slips off, and the radical character stands revealed. Perhaps it comes through such a sentence as "Nothing fails like success"—a sentence which, taken superficially and out of its context, may seem no more than a sparkle of sheer Ingeian cleverness. But heard as he speaks it, with the accent of unmistakable sincerity suddenly crowding the smartness and tartness out of his voice, one recognises it as the key-note of his true personality. "Christianity needs to be saved from its own moral success," wrote Dr. Forsyth many years ago. Dean Inge stands with his whole personality for the paradox of the supreme failure of success, not only as applying to the Christian Church, but as true of every movement and class. This is the prophecy our age is waiting for. We may not worship success as frankly as our fathers did. We may have given up the blasphemous cant which saw in England's Imperial success the reward of her superior sanctity and the seal of God's favour towards her. We even have our own way of glorying in the Cross. But at the root we still worship success, though a far subtler form of it. "Jesus only succeeded once in public, when He was crucified"—the sentiment not inaptly sums up our present-day rehabilitation of the Cross. Dean Inge tells us that "It rarely happens that the Church can co-operate with a popular movement"; and this is only another way of saying that the Church can but rarely tread the path of success, and never because it is the path of success. It means more. It means that the Church must once again make up her mind

to incur the disfavour of aristocracy and democracy alike; that she must surrender what is at present her most ardent desire, to be recognised as the truest helper of the people's cause. That surrender is nothing less than the Church's Calvary, her filling up of what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ. Dr. Inge is bold enough to advocate a Church which will be able to listen to the vituperations of young Demos, listen to all his charges of indifference and un-Christliness, and hold her peace and go on her way. It sounds madly retrogressive. It *is* retrogressive. It means going back nineteen hundred years to the point at which the Church's Founder refused to persuade a man to divide his inheritance with his brother. To-day we want to take the office of arbitrator and persuader; but, in our deepest heart of hearts, are we sorry that our Lord took another path? Would we really like Him to have acted differently? Dr. Inge appeals to that deeper, truer heart of the Church of Christ which still vibrates to her Master's spirit. Not to seek the approval of either the masses or the classes, not to fret if she is termed faithless to Jesus by those who sincerely but blindly strive for the people's good, not to truckle to a democracy as she once truckled to a monarchy, not to seek to be cheered by a multitude who demanded the crucifixion of her Lord—this is the core of a message delivered with needless and damaging acerbity, invective and scorn. And, like wise men, we forget the flaws of the presentation, and, looking into the heart of the message, see not a "gloomy" prophet, but one who can afford to look gloom squarely in the face because of his deep faith in final issues. We need his message, unpalatable

though it be. We are told the Church is declining; some would have us believe that she is actually moribund. Well, if die she must, let us pray she may die of something less inglorious than "success." If Dr. Inge could re-tell his gospel with something more of sweetness and simplicity, something more of the Apostolic spirit, it would come with dynamic, whereas now it comes with irritative mordancy. But even as it is, those who are well and wisely read in the signs of the times may hail him as one of those voices in the wilderness that ever come to prepare the way of the Lord.

V

Rev. J. G. SIMPSON, M.A., D.D.

CANON OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON

EVERY now and again the conventional Sunday afternoon atmosphere at St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey is suddenly ruffled by the emergence of something altogether breezy and individual. A substantial, energetic figure mounts the pulpit stairs, a stentorian voice joins in the hymn with hearty gusto all but drowning the choir. But for his look of broad human gaiety—one had almost said jollity—which excludes any form of "unction," one might take him for a militant Methodist who had somehow got pitchforked into an Anglican surplice. A timid-looking woman at my side gazes somewhat apprehensively at the strong, happy, prosperous-looking man who is singing away with all the unconsciousness of enjoyment. "Is that Canon Simpson?" she whispers to her friend, "I thought he would be quite thin." For some occult reason quite a number of people expect Canon Simpson to be "quite thin," not only in bodily presence, but in the sense of a subtle rarefaction and ethereal sublimation of thought. And although they have had time to recover from their disillusionment, his robust, fervid personality and concrete, practical utterance still seem to come with disturbing if not disconcerting force, especially at a Sunday afternoon Cathedral service. This is not to be wondered at. Those who have studied such an

audience know how largely it is composed of the shabby genteel and the respectably derelict. Its nucleus of *habitués* is made up of pathetic, faded, straitened men and women, who have drifted into the backwaters of life never again to launch upon the glad, broad stream. Gentle, conventional souls they are, keeping faith in God and goodwill towards men in the teeth of cruel and bitter experiences. And even the prosperous section of these gatherings bears for the most part a certain subdued and conventional stamp. It dreads extremes and seeks safety in middle ways. It believes in authority, whether civil or spiritual, and defers to it with a respect which is neither ignoble truckling nor mere formality. And in the pulpit stands a virile, masterful, unhesitating preacher, with a turn for caustic characterization and a nice sense of humour. Of sentiment there is scarcely a trace, of timidity still less. Small wonder that the bewilderment of pale, tremulous souls looks up at him out of weary eyes. Grave and subdued at all times, these people never look quite so solemn as when Dr. Simpson says some smart and witty thing.

And upon such audiences the Canon launches forth his complex and heavily syncopated oratory, embodying the thoughts of an independent and somewhat impatient mind. Perhaps it is Hospital Sunday, and his hearers are expecting a splinter of the true Cross to be dropped into the bitter waters of pain. There are those who have sick ones. There are many who bear the sicknesses of the world upon their hearts, whether from intuitive sympathy or through the grace of the Lord Christ. There are many, again, who crave satisfaction for their sentimental nature.

But all expectations, valid or illegitimate, are disappointed. Dr. Simpson is, in fact, not talking to the people before him at all. He is talking to a type —to the modern man, the pragmatic, unimaginative, pedestrian twentieth-century Christian. The type is represented in the audience, of course, but the congregation which Dr. Simpson actually has in his mind is composed wholly and exclusively of that one type; it is the same all through, like a ball of lard. Such an audience exists only in the mind of the preacher, and one is tempted to be supremely grateful for that, for a Cathedral full of "modern men" would be ill to endure. In spite of his wide experience among all sorts and conditions of men in the North, he is so closely thrall to this ideal audience of his—possibly the impact of London upon his imagination is responsible for it—that he falls short of that particularity and reality of appeal which convert a lecture or a speech into a sermon. So he chooses for his Hospital Sunday text two words of St. James relating to respect of persons because they afford him an opportunity for challenging the comfortable, sensible modern man on the great social question with not a little of the prophet's hurling fire.

He reads his sermon a little too quickly, but with the purpose of being heard kept well and successfully in view. His sentences are too long and involved, however, and, with all their crisp, racy phrasing, savour too much of the college don. His characterization of modern Christianity is exceedingly neat and well done, and hits the mark with ruthless precision. But it is a thing to be "enjoyed"; it does not search or convict. We relish his hit at the "Hospital

Sunday Christian," to whom this Sunday makes far more appeal than Pentecost. It is absolutely true and badly needs saying, and yet one doubts whether it is not too well, too smartly said to find its rightful mark. And one is haunted by the same misgiving concerning most of the just and penetrative sayings that make a sermon by Dr. Simpson so acutely interesting. These things have a fatal knack of turning to sparkling froth unless they are said in the accents of a sacrificial yearning. To say sweet things sentimentally is the hall-mark of weakness; to say stern things tenderly the sign and seal of strength. And Dr. Simpson is strong enough to be able to afford to leave the harsh uttering of harsh things to the weakling whose temper is set on edge by the effort.

Canon Simpson's sympathies are with youth and progress. He bids us not to be afraid of being taunted with truckling to the new democracy. With prophetic fire he bids us examine ourselves and see whether our disapproval of the methods of the young movement is sincere; whether it does not conceal an un-Christian antagonism to its underlying ideal—social regeneration and righteousness. He warns us not to delude ourselves into thinking that Jesus found His way to Calvary merely to assert a remote spiritual claim. His claim was indeed spiritual, but it involved the creation of a kingdom of social righteousness; and this it was that caused, not the leaders of the proletariate, but the guardians of law and order to slay Him. The Canon's attitude is emphatically modern. He stands midway between the concentrated, spiritual urgency of evangelism, be it of the "High" or the "Low" type, and the detached

and critical eclecticism of "undogmatic Deans." He believes in the people, believes still more in the soul, and most of all in its Saviour. One cannot but think that time will prune his exuberant sympathies with popular causes and add equilibrium to his fiery mettle. He scarcely convinces us that it was indeed only the Pharisees and rulers who crucified Christ; those who know crowd-nature know how prone it is to the supreme betrayal—that of standing by and seeing its benefactors done to death, if not of shouting with their murderers. There is a road to Calvary besides that which passes through the land of Pharisees. And Dr. Simpson may find out some day that to deal with men in the lump, whether they be the masses or the classes, is to court heart-break and little profit in the end to either preacher or audience. And not until he comes to imitate the Divine foolishness of the Good Shepherd, who, looking out over a people scattered and torn which craved to make Him its leader, called His sheep one by one and led them out, will he enter his true kingdom.

As his fine periods, with their imposing rhythm and their embroidery of stinging wit and pungent characterization, roll through the great spaces, carrying, not hearsays and boneless platitudes, but the fresh, brave, unconventional thought of a sturdy mind, one feels that it would take very little to make Canon Simpson the most dynamic and impelling preacher in his communion. He has the ideal equipment of a popular preacher, in the best and most honourable sense of the term; one, that is, who not only pleases but moves and leads. But he comes short by the very things he seems to aim at most consciously. Thus he

is manifestly eager to show that he understands his audience when he should be bringing it under the spell of his subject. The result is that much of his preaching, even in printed form, bears the stamp of occasionalism, and trends to magnify the accidental, and one is left with the impression that he thinks more of the mind to which he addresses himself than of the Word which he is commissioned to preach. A staunch believer in Apostolical Succession, he yet seems to be more greatly preoccupied with the age than with the Church. His intellectual position is leavened with just enough of theological liberalism and Free Church principles—he preaches the need for a "Nonconformist conscience" within the Church of England—to render it somewhat turbid and inconsistent; and this want of clarity insensibly reacts upon his preaching. One divines a mind that has not quite come to terms with its old prepossessions and its new possessions. While he strives to put the accent upon first things, there is a latent theological equivocation and duality.

Dr. Simpson adds to wide reading the appropriative activity of a mind at once assimilative and constructive and the instincts of a born teacher. Dulness is impossible to him, and he is not afraid to put passion into his utterance. But, with all his gifts, he has not yet altogether found himself as a preacher. When he does find himself there will be few like him.

VI

Rev. H. HENSLEY HENSON, M.A., D.D.

CANON AND SUB-DEAN OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND RECTOR OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER

HAVING listened to a speech on Colonial Missions which tended to regard Christianity as an adjunct to Empire and suggested the imperial idea as a missionary motive, I had fallen to musing on the new utilitarianism, and scarcely noticed the incidence of another voice until something mordant and purposeful in it made me shake myself free of dreams and look squarely at the speaker. His dark eyes were full upon me, and their sharp and almost febrile ardour eclipsed all the rest for the time being. In those restless, brilliant eyes that seemed to will something not quite explicit or determinate as yet, the soul of the man had found a refuge. The rest was interesting and even a little enigmatic, but lacked purposeful concentration. There was little to be read in the thin, somewhat boyish face, with its pointed chin, meekly lying hair, slanting eyebrows, and thin lips. Yet it invited inquiry. It seemed tantalisingly incomplete and vague. Its general impassivity and pallor seemed to suggest an anæmic soul, and while the eyes gave the lie to that, their passion seemed to be distinctly intellectual, not emotional or visionary. His extreme nervousness distracted one's attention from what he was saying to the point of fascination. After a while I found it difficult to take my eyes off those

ever-shifting and fidgeting hands that were ceaselessly fumbling at watch and chain, or performing strange little flutterings and twistings on their own account. When at last I brought my mind to what he was saying, I realised that he was speaking remarkably well, and that in a quiet, entirely unobtrusive and inexplicit but quite unmistakable way he was counteracting the tendency of the previous speaker. Without any polemical turn or reference, he laid it down that Christianity was not there for the sake of Empire, but for its own sake; that British traditions are not necessarily a guarantee for the maintenance of a Christian morality; and that unless Christian sentiment was constantly fed from its source—the Gospel of Christ—the British flag would inevitably come to cover a dechristianizing ethic. He spoke with considerable intensity, and with the unassuming courage of the man who does not mind playing a losing game and can recognise a hero in the hour of his defeat. There was an entire absence of sleekness or unction. High and lofty things were tacitly taken for granted; virtues were not spelt with capitals, vices were not italicized. When he had finished one wanted to hear him again, and yet there was nothing trenchant or original in what he had said. What force it had was of temperament rather than of thought. This was my first experience of Canon Hensley Henson.

The next time I heard Canon Henson he was preaching at his own church. The day was grey, and the electric light fell upon the tattered banners above the altar and mingled with struggling wisps of daylight to play among the glories of the ancient Flemish window which is the pride of St. Margaret's. A sedate

and dignified congregation filled the pews. The service proceeded in smooth, harmonious progression, like the low, polished treads of a beautiful old staircase. One boyish treble outlined itself against a background of paler voices, as golden embroidery on grey homespun—the only salient feature in all the stately and unruffled ritual until the preacher mounted the pulpit. Then something unexpected and violent intruded itself upon the placid reverence of the place—something that made no show of sound or fury, that spoke calmly, indeed, and in quiet tones, yet shrieked defiance at the gracious conventions of its environment. The pulpit lamp cast upward shadows and made mystery of the sharp, provocative face of the preacher. There was an unexpectedness about the voice which I had not noticed on the previous occasion, the unexpectedness of the utterly unofficial and unclerical amid starkly ecclesiastical surroundings. A distinctly uncomfortable voice it is, whose dry *timbre* effectually dispels the illusions of one's surroundings, scraping mediæval ideals out of existence, cutting through ecclesiastical assumptions, shattering popular idols with noiseless thoroughness. Something in its dry and reedy quality makes short work of pious fictions, leaves no weakness unexposed.

Once more the sense of keen, indomitable will breaks in upon one. The preacher's external endowment is of the scantiest, but his will is a hard rider determined to get the last ounce out of a poor steed. He refuses to accept his limitations; that is perhaps why his by no means glowing or trenchant speech has something of wild, heroic quality latent in its depths. That his voice cracks and crumbles, pipes

and breaks under the energy which works it is a mere detail: it is the energy that counts, and every now and then the strange miracle in which the will transfigures plainness into beauty takes place, and we realize Rodin's *L'énergie c'est la grâce suprême.* The very imperfection of his somewhat lisping utterance is wrought into strength and effectiveness by the potter Will in whose hands it is as clay. Will moulds his thought. That he is a forceful and constructive thinker in any sense of the word cannot be asserted. In most of his sermons the impression is that of a man who has read widely and assimilated wisely rather than thought deeply. But there is a keen, bright flame in his personality which touches his thought with fire. He believes in what he says so wholly and unreservedly that the derivative becomes the original in the transforming hands of an experimental and recreative faith. And he believes in himself. Here also his genius is his faith. For the rest, he is interesting, with the interest of things not quite easy to define. He wills strenuously, but one does not altogether know just *what* he wills ultimately and at bottom. He is palpably a significant figure, but it is not so easy to say what exactly he signifies, and for how much he is going to count in the long run. For he is not cast in any single mould. With all his concentrated purposefulness, there is something cooling and slackening in his composition, something vigilant and almost distrustful, something very shrewd and long-sighted in his most impassioned appeal. He stands for big and difficult things that demand absolute self-surrender to their claims. And he is prepared to go far in his endeavour to accomplish

them; the only question is how far and whether far enough. Irresistibly the biting old couplet jumps to one's mind:

> "Oh, Nancy Brown, I love you dearly;
> My heart is yours—*or very nearly*."

As one listens to Canon Henson one is haunted by that "very nearly." His personality trembles on the verge of high effectiveness: one would not like to think of it as going through the mortifying process known as falling between two stools. So, as one follows his trenchant and well-knit argument, a live and searching wonder springs up. Questions arise in one's mind that only time will answer. He is emphatically a man to watch. Though he has been before the public some years, "his past is still before him," so to speak.

One spectre haunts him unceasingly—the disunion of Christendom and the intolerant attitude of a certain large and overwhelmingly weighty section of the Church of England towards what he calls "those powerful non-episcopal Churches which in this country are called Nonconformist." This attitude he unsparingly and unequivocally repudiates. "It is not the older Anglican position," he contends, "nor is it the position legally defined in the Prayer Book, but it is certainly the position which prevails generally within the Anglican Communion, and is adopted by the Lambeth Conference." He is very much struck by the superlatively appreciative and even grateful tributes made by prominent Anglican dignitaries to the memory of such a man as Alexander Maclaren. "It is pleasant," he says, "to read such testimonies, but they seem to lose reality when we

remember that the Archbishop and the Bishop and the Dean are compelled by the ecclesiastical theory which now dominates the Church of England to hold this eminent Christian minister to have been no validly ordained pastor at all, and that all would have felt themselves compelled, however reluctantly, to refuse communion with him. Now supposing they were to apply to Dr. Maclaren's position the logic of St. Peter, would they not be led to the conclusion that, since God Himself had owned this man's ministry, they would be profane to refuse to do so?" Bravely spoken. But there remains a lurking doubt whether the words have that sanction in the "true" principles of the Church of England which the speaker claims for them. For, in spite of all the Protestantism of the Prayer Book, the Church of England represents a compromise which holds at least as good a case for the most exclusive sacerdotalism as for evangelical brotherhood in the ministry. If one cared to urge that it was only in the form of Church government that the English Reformation was incomplete, it might be answered that it is impossible to retain a form without retaining the possibility of the resurrection of that for which the form stands. For all ritual and form is doctrine in essence—doctrine, not mere "dress"; and even where it is a mere form, it enshrines ghosts which may at any moment clothe themselves with a substance that cannot be denied or explained away.

VII

Rev. Father P. N. WAGGETT, M.A.

SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, COWLEY

To be a Cowley Father is to go through life burdened with an oppressive reputation for eloquence, but Father Waggett bears the weight of this tradition with calm ease. Without any palpable expenditure of nervous energy, without any show of oratory, emotional intensity or prophetic passion, he cuts a way clear through the integuments of preoccupation, prejudice and dulness which sheathe even the religious crowd-soul and stabs it broad awake. As he speaks interest springs up, alive and searching; one is compelled to listen, almost compelled to yield, for the time being, to an argument whose force resides not in itself but in the superb carelessness of the preacher to mediate it and make it reasonable to the outsider. Afterwards one wonders a little that one should have given such a strangely submissive attention to a preacher who, while undeniably eloquent and sincere, is not one whit more so than many others of his school to whom one has listened far more critically. Father Waggett has neither the wonderful clarion voice of Father Frere, nor the impetuous genius of Father Stanton, nor the searching insight of Father Paul Bull, nor the broad humanity of Father Adderley. He is far more drily didactic than any of these, and far less concerned to make an

impression. His underlying severity is, indeed, somewhat reminiscent of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, though it lacks the touch of acerbity and veiled "bullying" which characterizes the latter and lacks also the passion at its root. "Lo, with no winning words I would entice you," might be his motto, spoken with an unmistakable but entirely unassertive pride.

It is this disregard of apologetic accommodation that impresses with a sense of authority, and all the more as it has no kinship with arrogance or *hauteur*. As he goes on and warms to his task, his speech takes on sonority, colour and rhythm. It rises to flights of pure eloquence, it startles and stabs with sharp shafts of penetrative insight, it trembles towards passion, it verges on entreaty. And yet, it is not the glow and swing of the thing that hold us in the end, but the preacher's consciousness of authority. It is easy to defy an assumption of authority based upon disrespect, contemptuous pity, and unreasoning anathemas for the opinions of those who challenge it; but here is the calm, dry, unassuming authority of a man whose attitude is one of a somewhat cold, but quite sincere, respect for his opponents, and who refuses to discuss certain points with those "outside the fold," not because he despises them, but because to discuss what to him is self-evidencing and self-authenticated does not commend itself to his mind as likely to be of service to anybody concerned. Young as he is, he has spent too much time in self-criticism to have either leisure or relish for ridiculing his opponent. He is there to represent certain things. He represents them unequivocally and completely, without any taint of offensiveness, but also without

any marked desire to conciliate. Here lies at once his strength and his weakness. In the case of a man of Father Stanton's temperament, we may begin by being violently antagonized, but are almost sure to end in discovering the lovable and loving core of the man and in being deeply moved by the heart of his message, however much we may find to offend us at the circumference. With Father Waggett we end as we begin—by respecting him. We say, perchance, after a course of Lenten addresses at St. Paul's, "All the preachers were excellent, but there is something extraordinarily respect-compelling about Father Waggett, something quite unique, especially in a man of his age. We must hear him again at the next opportunity." And on further hearings the respect deepens. Unsuspected degrees of ability and power are revealed; unguessed depths are opened. Our initial impressions of a conspicuously sincere, temperate, dignified personality are confirmed. What remains lacking is warmth of contact, immediacy of impact. Something hard and dry, something even a little impersonal, prevents intimacy between preacher and hearer. This is not caused by the absence of emotional and sentimental elements. The late Archbishop Temple could not be accused of either emotional or sentimental warmth, yet his appeal was acutely and often startlingly personal; there was a nowise winsome but undeniably real immediacy of contact. Father Waggett, with all his earnestness, remains somewhat aloof, and one suspects this is partly temperamental and partly due to a priestly consciousness which humanizes some men and depersonalizes others. Those who have any knowledge of

the Roman Catholic priesthood will readily recognise the two types.

At St. Paul's Father Waggett is a little out of the picture, for he cannot be fully explained without that form of extreme ritualism for which he stands, and needs the background of a truly Anglo-Catholic place of worship to give him his whole significance. To come even within sight of knowing him, one must get him in the congenial surroundings provided by such churches as St. Alban's, Holborn. Not long ago I had the happiness of hearing him preach at St. Peter's, London Docks, on the occasion of the patronal festival. As he walked in the procession, his personality stood out in strong relief, his unassertive dignity and unaffected bearing clashing sharply against this priest's servile devoutness, that one's furtive, shuffling humility, and yonder one's nervous self-importance. Very still and erect he sat or knelt in his stall while "High Mass" was consummated—the most significant figure in the whole group of priests and servers. In all that intricate ceremonial pattern of advancing and retreating, genuflecting and making the sign of the Cross, donning and doffing, sitting, kneeling and rising—a ritual chain which had every link of Rome's ornate symbolism and lacked only Rome's superb ease and infallible accuracy of execution—he was the only perfectly self-poised and assured person. True, he took no part in the ceremony of the altar, but one felt instinctively that he alone of all present could wear the robe of intricate usage to the manner born as though he wore it not. As he ascended the pulpit the impression of unpretentious dignity deepened. In vain one looked for little priestly airs, for anything

that was deliberately assumed or consciously hieratic. Any humble Baptist pastor might have ascended the pulpit in the same simple, unposed way. Standing in silence for a moment, without any pretence at a prayerful attitude, he let his straight, keen, narrow eyes take in his audience, without rude eagerness but also without any affectation of incuriosity. He wanted to get a good look at the people to whom he had to speak the Word of God, and he took it. A glint of kindly humour softens the arrowy keenness of those unromantic eyes; there is humour about the thin lips also, and not a little genuine sympathy. For the rest, one is conscious of a wide-awake, alert, sensible face—the face of a man who has scant patience with fads and fancies, but who knows real pain and real anguish of soul when he sees them; the face of a man who has thought deeply along his own severely practical lines and who has allowed his religion to cost him something, to make him uncomfortable. The voice is not conspicuously sympathetic, but there is something powerfully reassuring in its firm, vigorous accents. It is emphatically the voice of a man who can be trusted not only to do the fair thing, but to do the humane, the considerate, the brotherly thing.

Without either haste or undue preambling, he plunges into his subject — Peter in prison and the Church releasing him under God through its prayers. The Church, not the saints, not even the greatest of them, is the true hero of the Book of the Acts—that is the idea he proceeds to drive home with a force that is all the more effective because it makes no noise. Herod stretching a hostile hand against—

not James and Peter, but "certain of the Church" is an illustration he uses to clinch his point that the Church, however inchoate and simple in form, was the central idea in Apostolic Christianity. With an access of eloquence, urgent though never unmeasured, the preacher extols the Church's office of intercession. He has much that is fine and searching to say about the greatness, the sheer splendour of this our high calling. With penetrative skill an intimate little picture is etched in, the picture of a man as he gets older and wiser finding himself at the end of the day pouring out his soul in pure intercession. That rigid self-examination he had meant to make, that fervent aspiration, that act of faith, that solemn meditation—all are forgotten. Very simply and by name he prays for a great multitude of people he has known long ago, for old school companions and college friends, for folk who had been good to him when he was a little chap, for kinsfolk and acquaintances, for all sorts of men he has been linked up to during the course of his life. Turning to his devout audience, the preacher lays a special burden of intercession upon its heart. Peter is no longer in prison, nor does he need the intercession of the Church in any wise; but what of his successors? Bishops are men of highly trained and sensitive minds; they are beset by those who would influence them in their favour, torn between rival parties, tossed between many opinions. "It is easy for unimportant people like you or me to be consistent. Who cares what the Rev. Nobody thinks? Who wants to alter his opinion? There are no letters for him from London clubs, no one

button-holes him outside the House of Lords.'' The keen eyes flash, the voice warms to a glow which deepens as he draws the picture of present-day England as a nation based upon work and wages. Better, he cries, than based upon pleasure or slavery, but not good enough. The man makes work his God, and puts his foreman into a painted window, if only work will come to him; for it is the Nemesis of a work-worshipping nation that both work and wages tend to disappear. Man is not organised for work only; he is made for worship; and the Church, so far from being a little slice of one kind of life within a huge area of a very different kind of life, must express the highest, the typical life of the Englishman.

And as the preacher closes on the note of this imperial ideal, the secret of his compelling power is revealed. He is dominated by a great immortal idea, where others are dominated by a priestly or ecclesiastical convention. That is why the ''dark'' ages reduce our enlightenment to a farthing rushlight; that is why Father Waggett counts and tells, where mere enthusiasts for ritual fail to convince.

VIII

Rev. PERCY DEARMER, M.A., D.D.

VICAR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PRIMROSE HILL, LONDON

Of many a clergyman it can be said that his own life and the life of his church run in different moulds. He is one thing, the church another. The church does not reflect his personality; he does not represent the life of the church. But one can hardly attend a service at Dr. Dearmer's church without realising that the picturesque-looking priest, with the somewhat weary pose and the deep, calm eyes, *is* St. Mary's. The church, with its characteristic individual aroma, is the inevitable outcome of his moulding temperament.

"One 'High' church is like another" is the common verdict of the "Low" or Nonconformist visitor; they all trend to Rome, differing only in the degree of their approximation. An hour or two at St. Mary's, preferably during Holy Week, would go to disabuse these confident judges. If nothing can be less "Protestant," it may be said with equal truth that nothing can be less "Roman" than St. Mary's on Good Friday. True, the crosses and pictures are veiled in accordance with Catholic custom; there are also an appalling number of services, and the beautiful "Responses" are sung. But there the resemblance ends. If the rest is not "Protestant," and if we refuse to accept Dr. Dearmer's assurance

that it is genuinely and primitively Anglican, we must admit that it is—Percy Dearmer. There is something individual and characteristic about every arrangement, and far more in the atmosphere behind it all. The indescribable air of mingled austerity and cheerfulness, the wording of the Parish Paper and the printed notices on the wall, the inviting book-stall attended by a genially respectful verger—all are instinct with something personal. While the worship may fairly be described as "Catholic," there is an entire absence of servility and gloom. Even though it is Good Friday, there is a certain under-current of cheerfulness, a shy anticipation of Easter joy; and this quiet gladness gives a bracing, exhilarating touch to the whole. One is interested immediately, so greatly interested that one has no time to criticise, or to exercise any Protestant conscience one may happen to possess.

Soon another salient characteristic of St. Mary's strikes upon one's consciousness—its palpable, though always dignified, protest against Rome, especially against certain devotional expressions of the Roman and mediæval spirit. There is no crucifix at St. Mary's, and, what is still more significant, no special cult of the Cross, even on Good Friday. There is also no copying of specifically Roman rites and ceremonies; even Tenebræ, that most Scriptural and least "Roman" of them all, is rejected in favour of the simple Prayer Book ritual. Nothing, indeed, could be less ornate by comparison with other "High" Anglican services than the Holy Week devotions at St. Mary's. There is a somewhat irritating absence of "form" about them, a suspicion

of slovenliness and uncertainty more akin to certain efforts to introduce liturgical form into Free Church worship than to the calm, assured liturgic habit of Anglicanism, let alone the magnificent ceremonial *savoir faire* of Rome. The Good Friday Evensong is specially simple: only a shortened form of Evening Prayer spoken, not intoned; two beautiful and usually unfamiliar hymns from the "English Hymnal," the special book in use at St. Mary's; then a sermon from Dr. Dearmer in a black gown, as likely as not on the true and the false attitude towards the Cross. Yet the uninitiated must not run away with the idea that a sublime carelessness of ritual rules at St. Mary's. The very reverse is the case. No one has studied the minutiæ of ritual so patiently and lovingly as Dr. Dearmer; none is so rigid a purist in the matter of ancient Anglo-Catholic tradition. It is an open secret, indeed, that the drawings in the latest publication of the Alcuin Club, illustrating the liturgy as it should be observed, represent the chief Sunday service at St. Mary's, though the architecture is purposely taken from a different church in each case. The substitution of "Sung Eucharist" for "Mass" indicates the spirit and temper of the church to a nicety. Bishop Ken's principle, "The Anglican ritual without innovations, Roman or Puritan," is rigidly followed.

There are personalities whose impact upon one's consciousness comes as a quick, hard blow. There are others who stretch a vague and tentative hand across the shadowy gulf that divides ego from ego. Dr. Dearmer's personality neither strikes nor fumbles; it invades. Without any consciously experienced

impact, it takes one's mind captive with a strangely compelling and inevitable influence. He looks a deliberate eclectic, every inch of him; fastidious, conscious, self-cultured, leisured. His weary air is the reflection of his mental temper, not a natural fatigue of body and brain. His delicate meticulousness of speech and deliberate balancing of word and phrase suggest the onlooker rather than the agonist in life's struggle. And yet, in spite of these traits, all calculated to minimise the power of his personality over robust and militant spirits, he *tells* strongly and unequivocally at the first contact. There is more than the artistic temperament here, far more than mannerism or cult. Below the assumption of the esoteric one divines something valid and competent, the force of "virtue," the imperative touch of a genuine temperament. We may smile at some of the things he is so desperately in earnest about; but there is a quality in that earnestness of his which lifts it far above idiosyncrasy or fanaticism into the region of creative energy. He may be the devotee of a cult; but it is a cult, not a craze or a hobby. He is a server in the Sanctuary.

Dr. Dearmer is not an orator. He speaks slowly and with marked quietism of style. Grey, not purple, is the colour of his speech; but one soon discovers how much deliberate study and how much pruning and restraint went to the making of that quiet but enchanting manner. There is a certain hesitancy, born not of incompetence, but of conscious deliberation. Casting that slow, long look of his at the congregation, he waits for the right word, the fit phrase, with the unvexed leisure of faith. Then there is the

characteristic little turn to his right, the movement of the hand—is it to where his watch lies?—and the word, the phrase, is found. Once more he lifts clear, untroubled eyes—now they are fixed upon empty space—and talks gently, quietly, but with unmistakable intensity. The stillness is never phlegmatic; beneath the veil of calm the fire trembles and flickers. Every now and then his lips part, poised for speech, and out of the silence there comes some delicate but potent touch of thought or word, some fluid saying perhaps, which cannot be detached from its context without falling dead, but which in its context counts for far more than a phrase. So far from creating nervousness, his hesitancy is strangely reassuring, and still more his severe reserve in speaking of holy things. One knows oneself secure from an attack of that appalling pulpit glibness which is still far too frequent in every denomination.

The sermon may take the form of a protest against the morbid cult of the Cross, which was the peculiar distemper of mediævalism and survives in the Roman Church. If so, there will be a review of the incidents of the Crucifixion, and a special emphasis upon the deep and holy reticence of the Evangelists concerning the details of our Lord's death. And then he will launch out upon his subject, calmly as a ship in still water, yet with concentrated seriousness of purpose. He is glad that nothing is ever said or done at St. Mary's to lift that beautiful veil of reticence and to turn curious and morbid eyes upon the physical details of Christ's sufferings. Such a pious curiosity is mediæval, and late mediæval at that. It is opposed to the primitive Christian spirit. In

the earliest devotions the picture is not that of a tortured, dying Christ, but of a king "reigning from the tree," with arms outstretched to embrace the world within their living warmth. In early Christian art there is not a single picture of the Crucifixion. In contrast to the disastrous unreserve of later times, he gives an exquisite description of the naïve and cheerful art of the Catacombs. Then follows a terse, severe picture of the Crucifixion as he sees it. It is the story of a Man who did His duty regardless of cost; a story told with a complete absence of morbidity, sentiment, or hysteria, with the emphasis laid not on the suffering, but on the doing of God's will. With that austere and incisive gentleness which is so completely characteristic of him, he sweeps the Gospel narrative clean of all merely emotional elements, and ends with an earnest and insistent plea for a return from the cult of a dead body hanging on a cross to the original, joyous Christian tradition of faith in a Christ who indeed died, but "yea, rather, who is risen again."

It is all very characteristic and individual. One may not agree with his one-sided depreciation of the ascetic element; one may contend that it is intense, intimate, cultured talk, rather than preaching in any full sense. And yet, if the essence of preaching be to get at close grips with the hearer, to speak to him face to face stripped of conventional barriers, Dr. Dearmer is a preacher of the most valid type.

IX

Rev. J. STUART HOLDEN, M.A.

VICAR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON

St. Paul's, Portman Square, wears that air of sober religiosity and explicit disregard for ecclesiastical frills and trimmings which we are accustomed to associate with the "Evangelical" section of the Church of England. Baptismal font, altar, lectern, pulpit—all are made on the conventional Anglican pattern, it is true, though of the plainest; but they are clearly not regarded as symbols. They are—well, pieces of furniture, very useful and even necessary for the orderly conduct of Divine worship, but mere furniture still; not outward signs of eternal mysteries, but things of common utility and decency. The service matches the church. Half-way between the severe simplicity of, say, the old Presbyterian worship and the sensuous glamour of Anglican ritualism, it lacks both the naked majesty of the former and the mysterious suggestiveness of the latter, but makes a strong appeal to the average mind with its characteristic liking for middle ways. For this reason, if for no other, the Evangelical form of Anglicanism squares with the temperament of the typical Englishman, but could appeal neither to the religious intellectualism of the Saxon Scot, nor to the visionary rapture of the Celt.

The service is spoken throughout, and as the dull, hollow, irregular murmur of the great congregation

falls upon one's ear, one realises how much there is to be said for the practice of intoning and chanting. There is something spiritless and depressing about unison speech, with its muffled, halting tread. The beautifully chanted *Te Deum* comes as an oasis in the morning service. Instead of falling into the common mistake of torturing it into an ambitious anthem—a procedure which ought to be reserved to Cathedral choirs, or, at any rate, for exceptionally strong and well-trained choirs—they chant it at St. Paul's, and choose the best and least hackneyed chants, with the result of getting thoroughly good congregational and yet far from uninteresting singing.

Once the service has begun, one knows what to expect from the man in the pulpit. In no section of the Church is there so much conformity to type as in the "Low" Anglican. I have heard evangelical Church of England preachers under the most varying conditions—in slum mission halls and in weathyl churches, in barracks and in college chapels—but the type, accent, mental colour, and spiritual outlook and temper were practically unvaried. There were differences in culture, manner and temperament, but not one of these differences was anything but superficial; they were *accidentia*, and nothing more. Thus, looking around at the well-to-do and placid yet thoroughly earnest congregation, and taking in the tone and temper of the service, I was not ill-prepared to make a pretty correct guess at the essential quality and general tone of the preaching. One might be sure it would have the tone of the dominant evangelicalism of the last generation, but with far more of sympathetic interest in the world at large, and with

far less of the *perfervidum* air about it. The preacher would insist upon having a doctrinal basis, but would take care not to expose his foundations over-much, covering them with a useful and competent piece of homiletic affected by the standards of the age, and with a modern sense of all things except theology. Without being original, it would very likely be powerful and honest because sincerely representing the preacher's mind. Such is the common type of evangelical preaching in these days. In the case of Mr. Holden one expected, in addition to these stock characteristics, the glorifying touch of the born preacher and of the artist in Scriptural exposition upon orthodox and "edifying" lines.

The contrast between the old and the new school of evangelical preachers hit one full in the face from the start. Not only was the old type more rigidly and preponderatingly doctrinal, but it also showed a certain radical hardness softened at the edges, but only at the edges, by the grace and graciousness of the Evangel. It had a Gospel to preach, an ultimatum to fling down; and though it be to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, it did not greatly trouble to adapt it to their respective viewpoints. It stood not as a lawyer pleading a case, nor as a prophet revealing his vision, but as a witness —a simple, convinced, unshakable witness to immutable things. What has a witness to do with the difficulties and prejudices of those who listen to him? So beneath a certain level-eyed, unimaginative sobriety there ran a purple thread of passion; not the lambent, leaping passion of spiritual ecstasy, but the dogged, vice-like passion of an almost obsessing

conviction. Of conciliation there was little; of apologetic, in the modern sense, none. Its most emotional appeal had a streak of almost fanatical hardness at the core of it; its invitations were often veiled threats.

But in Mr. Holden we see the best type of the new evangelical. With a robust, positive, authoritative message there goes a certain blandness and suavity. In his own line he is apologetic; that is, he has the wise, winsome, discriminating way of the born teacher. However much in earnest he is, his voice and bearing are always well within the limits of correct society expression. He has an eye to his audience, and never steps outside their mental and social *milieu*. He is a gentleman of the conventional and cultivated school speaking to gentlemen of the same mature and genial type, maintaining certain lines of faith and piety with sane and cultured earnestness. His clear, well-modulated voice precludes roughness; his language is fluent and unmistakably cultured; his presentation has all the power of experimental reality and solicitous persuasiveness. He may know the terrors of the Lord, but he must ever persuade, not threaten. Moderate in expression and treatment, he addresses himself to his special public, people of "moderate" temperament and experience—people who do not go greatly astray either in faith or in morals, but in whom the monotony and low-levelled steadiness of their virtue beget a poignant craving for "something more." And within that class his message comes most directly to the well-meaning and serious church-goer who has heard many sermons but never met the Lord in the way. Of

> "The terror that whispers in darkness and flames in light,
> The doubt that speaks in the silence of earth and sea,"

and of all the dread, passionate, tenebrous conflicts of soul which these lines cover he has little or nothing to say. But within his own range he is entirely effective.

Mr. Holden is a preacher by the grace of God. He speaks with the authority of one whose warrant for preaching is more than the possession of a talent or the prompting of an inclination. He has a gift of smooth, rich language, and would find it easy to clothe the romance of piety in the purple and fine linen of genial literature. But having given himself, not to the word that interests, but to the Word that saves, his preaching is of a different order. The æstheticist, to whom art is more than life, and the modernist, to whom liberty is more than truth, will be bored, if not repelled, by his message. So will the boneless mystic, who objects to having the parcel of faith tied round with the string of dogma. But the multitude of average men and women, who care little about questions of criticism or artistry and everything for that which heals and liberates the sin-sick soul, giving life where before there was mere existence, will know how to appreciate such preaching. To the cultured classes especially, who are repelled by the coarse, intrusive methods of the professional evangelist, he comes with signal acceptance. Bringing to the old Gospel a more tender and liberal understanding of human nature and a less crude and forensic conception of the great doctrines of salvation, he wins by the sympathetic and balanced way in which he states his convictions, by the unvarying blandness and grace of his appeal. He does not bully in the pulpit; he never grows peevish or sub-acid, is never dogmatic in the wrong place, never prying or indelicate—is, in

fact, the ideal evangelist for the upper-middle class. That this has its counterbalancing weakness need hardly be pointed out. Daring vision, flashing suggestiveness, the thrill and poignancy of the word that falls like a sword, the cry that blisters as fire, the appeal that goes deeper than tears belong to his order of religious temperament as little as darting dialectic, or philosophical acumen, or revolutionary insight. He walks a broad, well-laid-out road, untroubled by the thorns of sorrowful mysteries; but he walks it in his own way, and not without labour and honest exertion.

Like most of his school, he lays an earnest and enthusiastic emphasis upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, bringing it into vital relation to man's daily need; and it is here that his strength lieth—here and in his practical use of Scripture. The man who, in these torpid and anæmic days, can persuade people that the inspiration and endowment of the Holy Ghost are at the disposal of the dullest, the most baffled and groping of struggling souls, speaks a redemptive and liberating word. And Mr. Holden speaks it with winsomeness and power.

The conviction of a serious, cultured, sane mind, Mr. Holden's evangelicalism has nothing bitter or crude about it. He declines to enter into the discussion of critical issues, deeming them outside his God-appointed problem, and has been known to stand up in staunch friendship and defence for men who were poles asunder from him in theological and ecclesiastical conviction. Without any outstanding gifts of personality or intellect, he is one of the forces that go to secure respect for the Evangelical position, even from those who diverge from it most completely.

CONGREGATIONAL

I

Rev. J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D.[1]

MINISTER OF FIFTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK

SOME sixty years ago, when John Angell James was minister of Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham, a Spring Hill student made the extraordinary, un-youthful prophecy that the church would go to pieces when Mr. James went to heaven. That gloomy young prophet was Robert William Dale, and how he lived to disprove his prophecy is written in the annals of English Nonconformity. His place was perhaps even harder to fill, for he was at once a master of affairs and an original thinker; and in seeking for a successor the people of Carrs Lane wisely did not wait till the same rare combination had been unearthed from some corner of the land, but turned to one who was *par excellence* a preacher and a pastor. So the young minister of St. James's Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, reigned in his stead, and his exploits too need no recounting.

Dr. Jowett is a preacher, not only by right of unique pulpit gifts, but from deliberate choice and by undeviating concentration of purpose. I have met men who knew him as a student in Edinburgh, and they knew then that Jowett meant to do only the one thing—to preach, and that all his study and observation,

[1] Dr. Jowett has been known as a Congregationalist for so many years that his natural place is in this section.

and even the lighter reading of his leisure hours, were bent to the service of his one controlling purpose. He literally gave himself to preaching with a dedication that knew no reserves or relaxations, and he reaped a rich reward. He is a master-craftsman of the pulpit as well as a supreme artist. Along certain lines of natural endowment he has genius, along other less inherently congenial lines he has achieved excellence by dint of the minutest application and the most unwearying patience. His elocution is perfect, his enunciation clear-cut and precise to a degree, without being in the least unnatural. His voice comes with a cadence which in most other preachers would produce a monotonous, effeminate, or even grotesque effect, according to the individual temperament of the man ; in his severely disciplined and unfailing control it is suggestive, effective, at times thrilling as pure song. Against its gleaming background of intertwined gold and silver the robuster, deeper, often violently aggressive tones outline themselves with a certain stormy splendour. He has studied language as he has studied his voice—patiently, perseveringly, and with his specific end kept rigidly in view. He has striven not for the fine, the beautiful, or the exotic, but for the apt word, the telling phrase, the simile that is understood by the average man and goes to his heart. Take his preaching at what angle you will, examine thought, word, manner, or voice—at every point there is abundant evidence of purposeful craftsmanship working upon a fine natural endowment.

He does not look the great preacher. His face is of the American type—close-knit, realistic, active.

His eyes look outwards, fling grappling-hooks upon actuality and grip it tightly. His pendulous moustache effectively conceals what mobility or hint of eloquence the lips might hold. He begins slowly and softly, with the serious and measured air of one who thinks before he speaks and is not likely to be betrayed into extremes. One has all but surrendered to disappointment when one becomes conscious of a gradual broadening and deepening of voice, of the flickering of an imprisoned flame struggling towards the light. Presently the gestures follow the upward sweep of the voice and voice and hand go together, soaring in ever-broadening circles till the sound of wings seems to beat on the air, till every space is filled with swirling eddies of sound. One may not find anything original in the thought-stuff of the sermon. One may think his treatment too explicit, and miss the little seed of suggestion which turns the slice of soil into a garden. One may be out of agreement with the preacher's interpretation. Still one is caught up into a magic enchantment, swept from cramped horizons into a wide splendour and opulence, thrilled into something like spiritual passion. It is only the blending of voice and gesture and language into one upward-panting impulse, only the communication of an exultant motion. It is sheer artistry, but artistry touched and transfigured by conviction.

Such preaching has its perils, and Dr. Jowett is not unconscious of them. Some years ago a newspaper reported that he had spoken of the sufferings of Christ "with charming effect," and he put it on record that the phrase sent him to his knees in humilia-

tion and shame. But while the sheer magnificence and wealth of his external endowment tend sometimes to make the listener forget the message in the absorbing delight of analysing his wonderful contrapuntal word-music into its component parts, grasping eagerly at every fleeting inflexion or gesture, there is nothing meretricious or cheap in Dr. Jowett's work, nothing that would sacrifice the Word to the word. Indeed, a good deal of that temptation to remain preoccupied with the preacher's presentation rather than with his burden lies not in him at all, but in the atmosphere inevitably created wherever a mixed multitude throngs to hear a great man. The secular curiosity and frank sensation-hunting of a certain proportion of the crowd diffuse an unhealthy miasma fatal to some souls. One has the sensation of being among "first-nighters" gathered to hear and appraise a virtuoso, and one often insidiously slides into the same attitude. It has always been my unrealised ambition to hear Dr. Jowett preach in a small church without being previously announced; only under such conditions could one hope to get a clear, "full-faced" view of him, where otherwise one sees obliquely and through a turbid medium.

An approach to ideal conditions was provided for Londoners on the occasion of Mr. Campbell's recognition as minister of the City Temple. While idle curiosity was responsible for the presence of not a few, a spirit of hushed and tremulous awe prevailed. The matchless voice of Joseph Parker still haunted the air, and even those hearts that did not sorrow because they would see his face no more felt those ghostly vibrations and were subdued. On the left

of the preacher the still form of him who had been plunged so suddenly into the cruel furnace of fame made its own solemn appeal.

"Unto me who am less than the least of all saints was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."—If any have forgotten the text, it was not the preacher's fault. Again and again he declaimed it, exhausting every shade of meaning by broad or subtle changes of that excellently-managed voice of his. One rendering haunts the memory: a little more than murmured "Unto me who am less than the least"—tremulous, regretful, anguished—followed by "was this grace given" in triumphant, virile, thunderous accents that crashed upon one with the uncompromising impact of a blow in the face. Dr. Jowett said many fine and striking things that day, but what remained with one was the wonder of a voice that could open up the Scriptures by nothing more than varying inflections and intonations. There was a recital of Paul's catalogue of unmentionable sinners, and then the sudden, quick, exultant pride, startling as a near shot—"And such were some of you." There was the threefold repetition of "We sorrow," the voice soaring higher and higher till it merged into actual song in whose ecstasy the very word "sorrow" was transmuted into pure joy. These inspirations falling upon a receptive atmosphere opened a deep door into the preacher's personality, to such as had eyes to see. They had nothing in common with an elocutionist's trick. They were the expression of Apostolic triumph in the unsearchable riches of grace made vocal, the irrepressible trills of a soaring bird intoxi-

cated with the blue in which it floats. One had heard finer vocal effects than even those; it was what lay behind them that thrilled and burnt its way to the deeps of the soul.

And now Dr. Jowett has taken his mingled pathos and splendour to a land where men perhaps respond to such oratory as his with a keener and more sensitive appreciation and a more immediate surrender. English in every fibre, and wholly saturated with the traditions of English Nonconformity, he has gone forth to another Church and another type of mind. Such was the joyful expectation in Fifth Avenue Church that already before his arrival every seat had been let, and on his first Sunday the great building, in which only twelve months before a mere handful of people had endured a tirade against Unitarianism at the hands of Dr. Torrey, was thronged to its full capacity in spite of a sweltering heat wave. One cannot as yet cast the horoscope for Dr. Jowett's American ministry. One thing is sure: that such a change must bring an indescribable rejuvenation to a preacher's mentality, and that so keen and vital a pulpit personality, dowered with unique gifts and charged with a message to which youth and strength must surely vibrate, will make a valuable and welcome contribution to the religious life of a strenuous city and race.

II

Rev. R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A.

MINISTER OF THE CITY TEMPLE, LONDON

It is now eleven years since the dying eyes of Joseph Parker saw in Mr. Campbell one who could, perchance, bend the Ulysses bow that was hanging slack and all but unstrung, and send the mighty arrow of inspired eloquence through the expectant air. The choice found wide-spread approval. Already Sir William Robertson Nicoll, with his usual flair for good preaching, had, in one of his inimitable "Claudius Clear" letters, told us of the young Brighton preacher, with the grey hair and the mysterious eyes, who had found something new and deep to say on the old mystery of pain, and in whom much was yet to be born; and, as always, the religious public followed Sir William's trusty leadership.

One remembers the recognition service—the crowded building, the tense, throbbing expectancy in which sorrowful regret and joyous anticipation were sharply mingled, Dr. Jowett's memorable sermon, and, most of all, his brief words of personal recognition. Turning to the still figure on his left, with a wistfulness that sat strangely on his pragmatic countenance, he said, "We all recognise that the Holy Father has made Mr. Campbell the temple of the Holy Spirit. The perfume of the Master's presence in him is felt by us all. Into this vast, lonely city he has come. My brother, I pray

that the good hand of God may be upon you.'' A throbbing silence followed, during which Mr. Campbell, who had been sitting by the preacher's side with a stillness born of nervous tension, rose to respond to the charge. Those who were near him could see his fingers twisting together, and his dry lips open before ever a sound would come. At last he spoke, in a low voice shaken with sharp emotion, '' I loved him before ; I love him more now. Humbly I promise in the presence of this people that I will obey the charge given by my brother.''

Four years later the still, rapt figure that had bent so humbly to this solemn charge loomed stark and defiant through the acrid dust of theological controversy. The dust-cloud has cleared to-day, leaving both Mr. Campbell and ourselves the wiser. What lessons he has learnt from it is for him to know ; we have learnt two things at least : that there are theological Peter Pans who must not be treated as if they were grown up, and that Mr. Campbell is and remains a great preacher, whose crown no man can take from him.

A great preacher! Sitting in the City Temple before the service begins, one hears once again the matchless voice of Joseph Parker, with its flashing interplay of crying and laughter, scorn and rapture. Once more the whisper that fell so stilly, yet knocked so plangent and thunderous upon the heart, hurtles through the silence. The magic of his oratory, the flash of his fire-tipped power of suggestion, the spell of his spiritual genius overtake one again. *He* was a great preacher. Is this grey-haired, romantic intuitionist, with his spare voice and unremarkable

language, his lack of artistry and proportion, and his one-sided exposition, a great preacher also? Many would answer the question with an emphatic No; for so irritatively subjective is he, so absolutely is his preaching the passionate history of his own soul, that certain individualities and temperaments are too sharply repelled to see clearly or judge fairly. Such should endeavour to see the preacher through the eyes of his audience and read the answer there.

To look at a City Temple audience is to look into the heart of life; to see, as in a mirror, not its lurid, external contrasts, but its amazing spiritual contrasts. There is the casual element of curious or jaded hunters after the latest thing in preaching. There are those who "do" the City Temple because it is the correct thing. There is also the standing congregation—a mixed multitude in itself—and there is the crowd of those who have come because of the inappeasable crying of the soul in them. Too bewilderingly varied to be described, they yet fall into two great classes—those who are fighting the battle and those who have lost. On every hand one sees the expectant, eager, storm-vexed faces of men with their Armageddon still before them, men whose faith is in the making, and who have not lost the first keen chance of victory; men torn between flesh and spirit, but not beaten. And the defeated are there in almost equal numbers, the derelicts of life who look out of dreary, unexcited eyes, and wear the air of those about whom it doesn't matter; men who take their failure hard, and men who take it cynically; men who have made their bed among the unburied dead; men who have sown to the flesh and of the flesh reaped corruption; men whom

sin not their own is bringing in sorrow to the grave. These are the signs and seals of the preacher's power. The man who can hold not only so varied a crowd, but a crowd so desperately and palpably crying from the depths, who can make it to know itself understood, and inspire it with confidence of help and hope of relief, is a great preacher in the full sense of that much-abused word. And that a man with such sharply marked antinomies of mind and temperament should wrest this crown of greatness from many an entrancing orator or harmonious interpreter makes it doubly remarkable.

Antinomies there are in abundance. Even the physical countenance tells us that. There is a certain almost feminine sweetness, and the charm of brooding, pitying eyes wedded to a militant trenchancy of chin and a setting of the lips that spells pugnacity, relentlessness, and a characteristic passion for blurting out the thought of the moment, regardless of hurt.

In his preaching the contradiction becomes explicit. The secret of its greatness lies in the preacher's penetrative and compassionate understanding of the human heart, and in an almost miraculous faculty of interpreting that heart to itself. Like Jacob Behmen, his aim is "to help man to find himself and come to himself." In this he appeals essentially to the typical modern audience, whose unrest and dispeace are so largely conditioned by a lack of self-knowledge. Its mind is a chaos of unrelated ideas and half-phrased perceptions; its soul beats tremulously against misunderstood limitations in search of a misconceived liberty; its heart cries fretfully for the undefined good. And the preacher not only understands the secret of the

soul for himself, but can interpret each soul's secret to itself. He is the mediator through whom mute aspirations and wordless longings become articulate. And he not only interprets, but sympathises with a vivid and convincing sympathy. Terrible is the loneliness of a great city; afflicting the isolation of soul that comes to the sleeper whom God has awakened in the midst of a slumber-drugged world. Is it a wonder that the preacher who can make such feel that he understands and cares evokes an almost passionate admiration, an unreserved devotion?

But over against this keen and tender comprehension there crops out ever and anon an over-mastering desire to shock and provoke—a lust to utter the latest adventure of his spirit in the dim places where half-born things lie pulsing and entangled. "If I say, I will speak thus: behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children," is a counsel of spiritual chivalry which Mr. Campbell's precipitate and assertive temperament often forgets. One moment he is in the deep valley of spiritual experience, where the heart grows colloquial with Christ and the Spirit of God attends the soul with an immediacy we cannot trace. The next the spell is rudely broken, and he hurls a shaft of half-shaped thought hard as steel, startling as a near shot, lurid and barren as a meteor, dangerously half-true, into the quivering heart of the audience. It must be noted, however, that he is returning more and more from the sterile regions of controversy to the fruitful field of spiritual diagnosis and evangelical healing where his birthright is.

There are many minor antinomies in this interesting pulpit personality. There is, for instance, the

contrast between a certain deliberate purpose of effectiveness and a swift backwash of incontinent abandonment to the moment, often amounting to a complete surrender of reticence. Again the dualism between an almost substitutionary sympathy that can lose itself in its object and an often morbid and aggressive self-consciousness is very marked. On the one hand, each hearer feels that he is the only one who matters, that every dart in the quiver is meant for him, that all he thinks and says and does is of intense interest and priceless value to the man in the pulpit. On the other hand, there is only one personality in all that crowded place, only one over-arching individuality, one invasive and aggressive influence; all else is merely a background against which the preacher is outlined with a sharp-edged clearness that strikes upon the consciousness like lightning. Again and again, often in the middle of a passionately persuasive passage, the personal note is struck, sharply, provocatively. Personal views are vehemently vindicated, personal slights vigorously repudiated; for the time being the ego reigns supreme. The bald, bare sentence on the notice board, "Mr. Campbell preaches here every Sunday at 11 and 7, and every Thursday at 12," sums up the situation to a nicety. This eager, motley crowd is there to hear Mr. Campbell preach. So long as his voice vibrates in the air, each hearer is glued motionless to his seat. When the voice ceases there is a rush for the doors, and many go home without having once looked at or thought of the man in the next seat.

Once, in the course of a dynamic, lambent sermon on God as the jealous pursuant lover, the great soul-

hunter, I heard Mr. Campbell quote the climax of Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven":

> "Halts by me that footfall:
> Is my gloom, after all,
> Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
> 'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
> I am He whom thou seekest,
> Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'"

Without any other requisite for good elocution except originality of temperament, his speaking of the words had the quality that grips and thrills, and revealed in a pin-point the secret of his whole preaching. Not æsthetically fine or intellectually satisfying is his utterance, but haunting, thrilling,

> "Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing
> Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,
> Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity."

He belongs to the elect order of spiritual clairvoyants. The reading of the soul's secret, the evocation of spiritual atmosphere, the naturalisation of the Unseen are the three ingredients of his magic spell—a spell as old as the world and as mysterious as the wind in the trees.

III

Rev. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF CHESHUNT COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND MINISTER OF WESTMINSTER CHAPEL, LONDON

THE visitor to London with sermon-tasting proclivities will inevitably be told that he must on no account miss hearing Dr. Campbell Morgan, and the phrase "a great expositor" will as inevitably sum up his mentor's ground for making this recommendation. Our sermon-taster may echo this verdict after hearing Dr. Morgan and pass it on to the next comer; but if he happens to be gifted with an instinctive feeling for the highest type of expository work, he will come to the conclusion that Dr. Morgan is not so much a great expositor as a great preacher—and he will be right.

In a frank bit of autobiography contributed to a popular magazine, Dr. Morgan tells how, twenty-five years ago, after giving an address in a Midland town, he was accosted by a man who said, "You can preach, and you know it." His answer was characteristic. "Certainly. Why did you think I accepted your invitation?" And equally characteristic and revealing is his comment upon that answer after a quarter of a century. "I do not repent of my reply," he says. "I have no hesitation in affirming I can preach. I do not know anything else under the sun of which I am willing to make a similar affirmation. I am sure I dare not

say I can sing, and no friend of mine would suspect me of saying I can play golf. I can preach. It is the one thing I want to do, I cannot help doing, I would do as a recreation if I were not permitted to do it as a vocation.''

Dr. Morgan's self-estimate is absolutely just. He is a preacher, a great preacher of that convincing, authentic, imperious type which not only draws and grips the crowd, but wrings an admission of its greatness from those least in sympathy with the preacher's standpoint.

To describe a service at Westminster Chapel is a task of supererogation at this late hour of day. It has by this time become so familiar that one accepts it tacitly and incuriously as a charted and well-explored island in that seething tangle of cross-currents which we call the religious life of London. There is the great auditorium, with its somewhat secular and matter-of-fact air; the vast audience, largely middle-class and middle-aged, diffusing an atmosphere of earnest but neither passionate nor greatly adventurous religious aspiration. There is the tall, gaunt figure of the preacher, familiar from a hundred photographs; the high, narrow head suggestive of the prelatic temperament; the pale eyes, shallow at first sight, then suddenly deepening with a mysterious suggestion of that white flame we call the interior life; those long, thin, expository hands, speaking hands, carrying out the suggestion of lips which speak before ever they part. Presently the clear voice is launched easily and pleasantly upon the great space; it goes everywhere without effort, flexible within its own range, has that blending of

incisiveness and sweetness which betokens a fundamentally charitable but far from patient or pliable temper. Then there is the service, with its characteristic rustling of Bible leaves, its not particularly helpful or inspiring custom of responsive reading, its often unfortunate selection of hymns, and its very beautiful pulpit prayers, instinct with the rare note of pure adoration and worship. Lastly there is the sermon, with its characteristic blend of exposition, challenge, and appeal.

Turning back from the preacher to his audience, we become aware that he not only interests them, but holds them in the hollow of his hand. How does he do it? Not by any form of sensationalism or pandering or flamboyant oratory, not even by sustained eloquence or a dazzling eruption of purple patches: so much is clear on the merest surface-glance. But neither does he hold them by that spiritual magic, that divine glamour by which elect seers sometimes carry the dull crowd-soul captive, at other times sting it into rage. Like most modern preachers, he is marked by a certain realistic quality. His eyelids are not over-weighted with the gold-dust of dreams. The high and noble obscurity of the enchanted mind caught in the mystic nets is not his, neither is the hot kindling of visionary passion. In vain one scans his direct, decisive, explicit speech for a hint of that strangely interwoven joy and terror which flicker in and out of the forwandered soul, that stands an adventurer upon the borderland beyond sleep and dream and silence, waiting for the incalculable hour, listening for the wind that never stirred "any tree that grows on ground." His is the

unhesitating, lucid temper which grips actuality with naked hands, always knows where it is going, sees what it sees in sharp, clear outline, sets itself to do the thing it can do and does it. This explains the "middle-aged" character of his audience (and middle-age comes upon many of us very early indeed in these days). For the old man who dreams dreams and the young man who sees visions his preaching has not very much; but dreamers and visionaries rarely seem to find their way into church pews—perhaps because the dreamer in the pulpit is so rare—and one likes to think for their sakes that there are more voices in the world than find utterance within church walls.

Wherein, then, lies Dr. Morgan's magic? Externally it is conditioned by perfect elocution, considerable dramatic power, a potent faculty of clear, forcible, direct speech, a mental habit and quality readily understood by the average educated man. His language is natural and unstrained. Of preciosity, paradox-mongering, or phrase-craft there is not a trace. Whatever a hearer may think of Dr. Morgan's message, there is small likelihood of his failing to understand it. Here is the superficial explanation of the preacher's success. Nothing irritates the average man more than something he cannot quite understand. Lucidity and simplicity are to him the fulfilment of the law of preaching.

But there is a far deeper explanation, and it is simply that Dr. Morgan really has a message, and that his one concern is how to deliver it. Going deeper still, he has not only a message, but the message to which the ageless heart of man will ever

respond. One may question his exegesis at times. One may find that his expository work, while it almost dazzles by its homiletic fertility and resource, its vital suggestiveness and its searching ethical application, is often a little strained and artificial —a putting in as much as a drawing out. Especially in his expository work on the Synoptics he often seems to take one out of the genius and spontaneity of our Lord's thought into a region far more sophisticated and less inspired, into a realm of secondary implications which grow neither out of the words nor out of the mind of Jesus. And yet no exegetical misgivings can dull one's mind to the authenticity and vitality of his message, or to the supreme value of his work in re-discovering the English Bible for the educated reader. To him belongs the enviable glory of providing, as no other living preacher, a way into the heart of Scripture for the man who has the will to listen to its inner meaning. He is dominated by a passionate and almost clairvoyant sense of new light breaking forth from the Word. What the age needs is not so much a right view of the Bible as the will to make a spiritual adventure upon it, to plunge into its heart and listen there for the great Word which made the Bible and is its life; and such preaching as Dr. Morgan's goes to evoke that "will to read," and to make Bible study once more a reality to thousands upon thousands. A great deal has been made of his alleged obscurantist attitude towards all forms of Biblical criticism. As a matter of fact, while his own position is undeniably conservative, he has a hospitable mind towards all legitimate criticism;

but in his expository work he avoids these questions, and it is his strength, not his weakness, that he plants himself unequivocally upon the English Bible as it stands, making straight for spiritual values. It is the English Bible the average man has to do with. Its inner meaning for his life is his first and last concern. Once he has discovered beyond all doubt that the Book speaks to him, he may be given a suitable amount of critical apparatus; before he has made this discovery the sanest and most devout of criticism is poison for him. To lead him to this discovery, and to train a generation of preachers whose ruling passion will be so to lead, is the genius of Dr. Morgan—the distinctive glory of his work which sets him above all merely popular and appealing preachers, among the unveilers of the Living Word.

IV

Rev. ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

MINISTER OF LYNDHURST ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON

ONE has heard it said that Dr. Horton is of the clan who never grow up—that he is still roaming at large, with fluid mind and youthful uncertainty of judgment, in the maze of thought, occasionally mistaking a blind alley for a straight path out of the tangle, and coming back to his starting point, humbled, perhaps, but certainly unashamed and with unbroken hope. There is just enough truth in this opinion to make it peculiarly misleading. What lends semblance to it is a certain unconquerable youthfulness of intellectual judgment and outlook, which, veiled by a demure and tentative manner, adds a touch of piquancy to an otherwise transparently simple nature. What gives it the lie, and that overwhelmingly, is—Lyndhurst Road Church. Founded in 1880, "when fifty-nine men and women who had found Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and wished to serve Him as their Lord entered into a sacred fellowship of faith and worship," it has grown to the great church it is to-day. And from that day of small things to this, Robert F. Horton has remained the beloved and trusted minister, many of the original members still continuing with him. This is not the work of a fumbler and groper; only a master-craftsman can build after this fashion.

And yet it is true, in a sense, that his mind is still in flux, and that the romance of mental pilgrimage is unstaled in his heart. No religious teacher of any worth but goes adventuring among the stars, and he must be a wise man, indeed—or else the most hopeless of fools—who never loses his way; but there is no doubt that the map of Dr. Horton's pilgrimage is more intricately crossed than that of many another, although none ever had a more single eye to the goal. One reason for this must be sought in a certain lack of the bump of mental locality; another in his conspicuous lack of vanity or ambition, which has made him less afraid than most of taking the wrong turning.

Needless to say, his preaching reflects the habit of a soul earnestly *in via*. One can trace in it various stages and aspects of his journey, not so much succeeding as crossing and overlapping each other. One aspect one remembers as typified in his remarkable Kensington Mission of 1896, whose success was largely due to the completeness with which the missioner put his personality into his work. In the evening addresses the fulgent heart that lay hidden beneath his quiet composure came to its own, and a somewhat difficult audience was thrilled by appeals which, without being unpleasantly aggressive or emotional, were yet lyrical and passionate. There was something of Henry Drummond's magnetism about these addresses; something also of Henry Drummond's inability to make a permanent and explicit impression upon a mixed audience. In the quiet morning meditations a sympathetic congregation drew out the exquisite immediacy of his religious nature. His

temperament was beautifully sunny then, and his speech so winsome and pellucid as to affect the sophisticated listener with the poignancy of contrast. There was nothing ambitious about those little addresses; not the most straitened and untaught of his hearers could have been more simple than this scholarly and distinguished preacher. Those were the days when his beautiful spiritual *naïveté* had not yet received its baptism of fire.

To-day the morning sermon at Lyndhurst Road is most frequently expository and part of a course of systematic teaching. Once upon a time it was not so. Then the preaching was evocative rather than explanatory, and the teacher hidden beneath the dreamer's mantle. Is it a mere fancy, or did the preaching of that day really lend a quietude to the place which is not found there now? The very walls rested the mind as the eye followed their convergence into cool curves of repose. A sensitive velvet silence was broken by a voluntary whose notes seemed to filter through the hushed, grey organ pipes as soft light filters through leafy boughs. The preacher seemed quietly wrought with vision. There was a large stillness in his look, a pregnant stillness in his voice. The sermon was a poem of the soul—a spiritual landscape whose silvery enchantment was as potent as it was elusive. There was no attempt at eloquence. "Grey" words—but of what a pearly lustrous grey!—went over like a flight of grey doves, and through them the speech of eternity whispered itself against mortal ears. But even while one surrendered to the charm, it was borne in upon the intuition that beneath the moonlight there pulsed a hidden red

flame which would one day, perhaps, shrivel up that exquisite charm.

Sometimes those morning meditations were varied by sermons on burning questions of the time—one remembers a needlessly harrowing one on the Armenian Atrocities—and by theological sermons in which not a few heresies were enunciated in a delightfully demure and sedate manner. At night he almost invariably preached *ad captandum*, largely setting the fashion of a kind of popular apologetic which is mercifully falling into disuse, and towards which he now himself takes a severely critical attitude—the appeal to great and successful men who believed in Christ. Long and dazzling lists of these illustrious believers were frequently marshalled before appreciative audiences, especially at the monthly Working Men's Lectures, and not even his undeniably noble handling could redeem a line of argument that was less than worthy of him.

To-day all this has passed. Time has touched the preacher's buoyant ardour; something sterner than time has invaded his house of contentment. He no longer rejoices in crowds. He gives his people that expository and systematic teaching which he believes to be their deepest need, though they know it not. His speech has lost its artistic charm in entering through the strait gate he saw before him. It may be that the sacrifice need not have been made; who can judge of that in a world in which even the Son of God had to enter into life maimed? A note of solemn warning, of passionate anxiety, as of one who has to give account of souls, has silenced much of the music of earlier days. Hear him say, in the

course of an able but exceedingly simple and "old-fashioned" sermon on the Epistle to the Hebrews taken as a whole—"'See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.' We neglect Him that speaketh from Heaven. And more than that, we neglect Him on the ground of that very love that brought Him down among us. Men reject Him because He emptied Himself and made Himself of no account, and was not ashamed to call them brethren. . . . Men and women, if you reject Him, there is no other to turn to, no other way, no other heaven. In rejecting Him you reject heaven, you lose all." In what humble, whitewashed country chapel would this sound too "grand"? And again: "'Obey them that have the rule over you. . . . Pray for us.' This tells you how you are to treat me. . . . You must not put my words aside as mere exposition. You must not criticise them. Rather recognise my anxiety on your behalf. *I can see that some of you are perishing.*" Two men were discussing this last sentence outside the church. They agreed it sounded a note rarely heard nowadays, but with a difference. The one said the preacher was fifty years behind the times; the other insisted that he was twenty years in advance. In the end one made the sensible remark that if people really were "perishing"—and the philosopher and the essayist are more certain about that than the average preacher—it is always "up to date" to tell them so.

The service at Lyndhurst Road is always touched with awe and significance. North of the Tweed they have an unworthy fashion of speaking of the devotional part of a service as "the preliminaries";

and the spirit, if not the term which expresses it, is not unknown in the South. Only too often one sees a minister plough his reluctant way through a service as though it were a thing to be got over somehow, with prayers listlessly spoken, hymns carelessly given out, lessons perfunctorily read. But when it comes to the sermon, what a change! Here all is ardour and eloquence and vital interest, and the effect is unspeakably depressing in its revelation of the egoist soul. But at Dr. Horton's there is no more devout and absorbed worshipper than the minister, and, inspired by him, the soul of the people pours itself out in prayer and praise.

It is somewhat difficult to realise Dr. Horton as the superintendent of the multiplicity of institutional and spiritual activities which make up the Lyndhurst Road, Kentish Town, and Cricklewood causes. He is emphatically not a man of affairs, not an organizer. His mind lacks tautness; it is intuitional rather than pragmatic. And, indeed, but for the remarkable band of workers who "run" everything so admirably and his able Warden, the burden would be too great. But that these workers are there to run it is ultimately traceable to the pastor's influence, and the power of creating workers is higher than that of managing an organization.

Dr. Horton's personality is fine rather than strong. One misses the virile note, and also a certain robustness of impact. This lack of tangible impact may be due to the fact that he possesses an essentially and perhaps unconsciously self-contained nature. While, for instance, he is always delighted to see one and unfailingly sympathetic, the visitor feels instinctively

that his coming or going makes very little difference to his cordial host. On the other hand, one is left with the impression of a soul in intimate and abiding communion with the Unseen. Dr. Horton is one of the few whom men agree to call saintly. Not greatly endowed with shrewdness or sagacity, and somewhat lacking in intellectual astringency and theological *nous*, he stands nevertheless as one of the most deservedly popular and spiritually influential personalities within the Free Churches. His preaching, writing, and social demeanour are those of the saint, and his intellectual gifts and grace of speech, so far from obscuring this quality, set it in a clearer light. On the surface a quiet, kindly, somewhat dreamy man of beautiful manners and genial company, a scholar unmistakably, a pastor to the soul of him, one need not be with him very long to divine beneath his gentle reticence the flame of the spiritual life, and to catch a glimpse of the beauty of holiness.

V

Rev. C. SILVESTER HORNE, M.A., M.P.

SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT OF WHITEFIELD'S CENTRAL MISSION, LONDON

OUTSIDE Mr. Horne's vestry there hangs the portrait of a man who might easily be mistaken for himself, and indeed is so mistaken by most people. It is the portrait of the former minister of Kensington Chapel, and it is not only a speaking likeness but a piece of spiritual portraiture. There is the long, far look of eyes that saw not only beyond the audience, but saw beyond the meadows of time over the stile of vision into eternal life. There is the reticent grace and almost romantic quality of poise and posture, and the suggestion of a large and noble leisure brooding over it all. There is also a deeper suggestion of an exquisitely poised spiritual temperament and a high fastidiousness of taste, a severe delicacy and fineness of mental and spiritual fibre. One looks and once more one hears a singularly sweet, clear, flexible voice launched out upon the quietude of Kensington Chapel, like a slow, white bird upon calm water. Again one is caught in the mingled spell of romantic chivalry and spiritual purity. Again one hears the music of delicate phrasing, feels the grace of suggestive imagery, fingers the thought-stuff shot through with golden threads of insight, beauty and emotion, surrenders to an appeal at once coy and insistent. In those days the preacher

bid fair to become, in his own way, a lord of language and a master-weaver of delicate thought.

But a call from the rough world came into this quiet and selective ministry, and Horne of Kensington became Horne of Whitefield's. Not a few of us wondered why the call was obeyed. Was it that his soul had grown weary and jaded amid the appreciation of a cultured Israel? Was it a grim suspicion that work approved by a section of religious *cognoscenti* might not stand the searching light and judgment of "the public square," to use Michelangelo's phrase? Did he feel that life was too short and crucial for so deliberate a culture, or did the cry of Christless London drown the music of leafy by-ways in his ear? Whatever was the immediate impulse—and no doubt it was all these and more—he chose Whitefield's, and thus it came about that the portrait outside the vestry which looks so like him is really the picture of a man who is gone.

For no man can give himself to such work as Whitefield's and remain the man he was. Some, indeed, might have lived a double life, and made a failure both of Whitefield's and of their own divided souls. Silvester Horne was made of nobler stuff. Yielding himself unreservedly to the grim exactions and rough-hewing influences of a Central Mission, he was changed in all but the inmost core of the hidden life. His fibre toughened and lost its fineness. His brain grew quick and ready where it had been slow-pondering and a-dream. His reticent, tentative grace gave place to a sure, easy mastery of the practically effective. His hold on reality was coupled to a robust grip on actuality. His manner took on the stamp

of the platform and the market-place. Much hard public speaking worked the sweetness out of his voice, and left it frayed and filmed under the violence of the energy that drives it forth. We go to hear him at Whitefield's these days, and wonder if Kensington was a dream, and are conscious of an irrepressible regret.

Has he lost, then, in coming to Whitefield's, and lost greatly and lastingly? The question forces itself upon those who knew him of old, but it is a quite unimportant question, after all. The great question is, If he lost, how and why did he lose? To that there is only one answer. Whatever was lost was well lost, for it was lost with Him who came down from the blue hills of dream and vision to walk the rough, muddy ways of a world's sin and need; whatever voice was silenced was drowned by the voice of those who cry out of wrong and are not heard, and for whom his heart was hot with pity and indignation. So whatever went from him—and much went from him—was not loss, but a filling up of what remains of the Kenosis of Christ. One thing, indeed, was gained—a passionate vision of the Cross. Many ravishing flowers and pleasant trees grow on the meadow-carpets of Galilee, but the Cross is the one tree that will not grow in that flowery soil, and so the Lord Christ had to set His face towards the grim, bare towers of Jerusalem, and His followers have ever had to do the same.

Yet another thing has remained amid the dust and clamour of pioneer work in Protean central London. Mr. Horne is still a preacher, in the full and honourable sense of that word. He has not developed into the platform orator who happened to stray into the pulpit

by mistake. No preoccupation with social service, no interest in public affairs, no ambition for popularity and quick success have been allowed to divert the high spiritual purpose, the dominant evangelical intention of his pulpit ministry. The demand of his audiences for popular treatment and the lack of sufficient time for study have necessarily resulted in a loss of profoundness and maturity ; but the best things —spiritual validity, gravity and urgency—have intensified rather than diminished. There is tenderness and sympathy in his preaching, backed by the virility which gives them force and value. Chivalry is there in abundant measure, and nobility of appeal. Felicity of illustration and description, resting upon a clear perception of his hearers' mental and moral habitat, makes it real and vibrant. Above all, the victorious note of a deathless faith in the salvability of man and in the power and intention of God transfigures and glorifies it.

A good deal of the criticism expended upon Whitefield's loses its force through failing to take account of the primal factor—the man at the helm. The great and intricate network of institutions and agencies clustering round the name do not sum up Whitefield's for good or evil. If they were one and all successful in the highest sense, they would not make its "election" sure ; if they were one and all failures, the waste could be summed up in little more than £ s. d., and the real gain would still remain to be discussed. For the thing that matters about a Central Mission, no less than about a "family chapel," is the man and his message. If money and strength be wasted on auxiliaries, it is regrettable but not fatal,

so long as the man and his message tell. It is an old-fashioned view to which we are just beginning to come back—that the thing that counts supremely in religious work is the Word backed up by the personality of the preacher—the Word made flesh. We are realising once again that the Word is alive, that it has feet to pursue and hands to grip; that it is not done with when it is spoken, but reverberates so widely and so long that we may well stand in awe when even the simplest lay preacher or Sunday-school teacher speaks it to a mere handful. There are many interesting things that might be said about Mr. Horne, things relating to his public work and to his more intimate aspects, to his political, social, and ecclesiastical convictions; but none of these would bear upon the preacher's influence directly. So fundamentally single, indeed, is his personality that there is only one thing that need be said—that he has given himself to the ministry at Whitefield's with the uttermost self-surrender, projecting himself into the needs and struggles of the common people till he could make every word tell and every sermon a spoken act, stripping himself of every glory of esoteric culture and personal prepossession, till only his naked sincerity and warm goodwill were left and he could enter into the straight gate of humanity's heart.

Listen to him preaching to a typical Whitefield's audience. There is unaffected directness in every word and gesture, vigorous earnestness in every movement, transparent sincerity in look and word. Not subtle, not scholarly, not calculating and striving for effect. Intensely personal, convincingly sympathetic, sternly practical, he does not care though his voice

break under the strain, or his gestures be uncouth in their vehemence. It must be a long time since he used an oratorical looking-glass, still longer since he wrote out an intricately wrought and finely balanced sermon. Now he cares for only one thing—to reach the man in the street, and to convince him that there is a God who does things, a God who cares not sentimentally but practically, morally, redemptively. He stands there dressed like "something in the City." He looks tired and jaded, but not out of training. One can imagine him achieving a particularly long low-level drive on the links. One can equally imagine him discussing the universe with appalling frankness with some old trusted pal and fellow-fighter. Only one thing one cannot imagine him doing—preaching to satisfy his own cultured taste or the taste of an eclectic audience, preaching comfortably to those at ease in Zion. Yet at one time such was his chosen path, and the leaving of it was not without pain.

He is a member of Parliament now, and by so much less a preacher ; but that belongs to a different chapter, and one's approval or disapproval matters little. He has faced the question, and one cannot doubt that his decision was as little selfish and carnal in motive as his first great move from Kensington to Whitefield's.

VI

Rev. J. D. JONES, M.A., B.D.

MINISTER OF RICHMOND HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BOURNEMOUTH

BOURNEMOUTH enjoys the distinction of having no problem of empty churches to face. If perchance one meets a few stragglers along the cliff during church time, one may safely conclude that, so far from having voluntarily absented themselves from Divine worship, they have tried in vain to seek admittance in a succession of overcrowded sanctuaries, and finally resigned themselves to their fate. A typical Sunday evening experience in this religious town was happily described by a little girl, who told her friends that she and her father had gone "first to St. Peter's, and that was full; then to St. Michael's, and that was quite full, too; and then we tried *St. Jones's*, but we couldn't get in there either, so we just took a walk on the cliff."

"St. Jones's" is visited by thousands upon thousands who only know its minister as a preacher who has found his way to their hearts, and would neither understand nor be greatly interested in his work as a Nonconformist leader. Always full, the "professional packers" of Richmond Hill Church have a brain-racking task when Easter or some other holiday season brings its avalanche of visitors. Perhaps no other living preacher is so popular outside his own denomination. Anglicans especially cheerfully submit to the unfamiliar service, in view of hearing a

preacher who combines the measured, sane temper congenial to their own predilections with something of the fire and freedom they miss in Anglicanism, and whose pulpit gifts are exceptional without being of a startling or turbulent order. Perhaps only one in fifty has any adequate or educated idea of the preacher's consummate technique and homiletic mastery ; the remaining forty-nine are attracted by the note of quiet strength and comfort which runs through all his utterance. It is emphatically "edifying" preaching. On a solid and reassuring foundation something smooth and strong is built. There is little of that pulling-down process which is so disconcerting to timid minds. Hammer blows are struck fair and square, but without crashing violence. There is just enough ornamentation to grace strength, not enough to conceal it. The whole effect is reassuring. To change the figure, one is on high tableland. The road is as level as an asphalt pavement. There is no rough hill-climbing to do, and yet one knows one is high above the sea, breathing mountain air without enduring mountain hardships. Preaching of this type is unfailingly attractive even in less skilled hands than Mr. Jones's ; in his master-grip it becomes an attractive force of the first magnitude.

Sometimes strange little sidelights are thrown upon his popularity in chance newspaper reports, as when one reads concerning a certain "comforting" sermon on the future life that "Mr. Jones will doubtless preach it again in various parts of the country, and wherever he delivers it men and women will be cheered and comforted." One tends to despair of ever getting at the true capacity of a modern

preacher. A man who can sustain the calamity we call a national reputation, meeting its multitudinous demands, and yet preach so well and luminously as Mr. Jones does, must be a pulpit genius at whose real stature we can only guess dimly. One occasionally hears of office-bearers who wrap a valued pastor in cotton wool and usurp a jealous monopoly upon his services, tabooing all outside engagements and strictly limiting his congregational duties. The policy is narrow, and few men will submit to such hothouse treatment. Yet a judiciously diluted application of it might in the end furnish the Church of Christ with a race of truly great preachers. What Mr. Jones might have been under such circumstances is hazardous to guess; more likely than not, he would have found refuge in the House of Commons long before the treatment had time to work.

Mr. Jones has justly been called "the unmitred Bishop of the best organised Congregational diocese in England." Congregationalism throughout Hampshire owes much of its well-knit and prosperous condition to his competent statesmanship and generous help. He is a prince of church-makers, and the country-side is dotted with the monuments of his building zeal. A would-be humorist has perpetrated a "Diary of J. D. Jones" (mercifully unpublished), in which appear such entries as "Initiated a Central Fund before breakfast; laid foundation stones of two new churches on my way to the links." He has won his way to the denominational leadership by sheer force of administrative ability and a competent grasp of the situation. Nothing strikes one more forcibly about all his work than its thoroughness

and proficiency. Endowed with only sufficient imagination to translate his own pragmatic dreams into terms of actuality, he sometimes "draws the circle premature"; on the other hand, he does not fall into the injustice of legislating for exceptional cases. As a leader he is eminently "safe," and his caution is one of the secrets of his popularity. Welshman though he is, he has little of the Celtic passion for lost hopes and forlorn causes, but takes the sanctified Saxon instinct for conquest into all his work. One remembers a Colonial Missionary address in which evangelization and success of empire were linked together as the Celtic soul could never link them, and which laid bare in a flash the very foundations of the speaker's religious temperament and of his success with the religious public. Any crusade initiated by a man of this calibre will be almost sure to come home in triumph. No decimation by shipwreck and plague—everything is too securely bottomed in forethought and prophylactic action. One cannot readily imagine Mr. Jones getting into denominational hot water; his invincible discretion will always steer him honourably over dangerous places. Less judicious spirits confess it would be something of a relief to read one day that Mr. Jones spoke with less than his accustomed wisdom and discretion, but the majority of prudent men hope this may not be before the Central Fund is set firmly on its feet.

All this reacts characteristically upon Mr. Jones's preaching. He is a born statesman who has found a perfect outlet for his ability in the life of his denomination and of the Free Churches. Within his own range, he is an invaluable leader who can

enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the Nonconformist public as few other men living. Representing the working pastorate, he has little interest in speculative thought, and is somewhat inclined to set bounds to theological liberty. He sees things from a rigidly pragmatic standpoint; from no other could a denominational machine be run successfully. And while his pragmatism is, needless to say, not of the coarse mercenary type, but transformed into the image of the pragmatism of the Father who worketh hitherto, yet it stamps his thought almost to the exclusion of other equally valid aspects. His preaching, then, is of an architectural, practical, mediating type. He is concerned with the evolution of a certain definite type of Christianity in his hearers, and everything is shaped to that end. In his audience he sees a church in embryo—a church after the pattern that will assimilate to certain well-defined, moderately progressive evangelical convictions and to a sober and open-eyed type of devotion, that will raise great funds and supply needy districts with places of worship, that will evangelize at home and abroad along certain lines, and, in a word, carry on the denominational and Nonconformist tradition as at present established. This gives at once a powerful leverage but also, of course, a measure of restriction to his preaching. It has all the force and moulding power of an explicitly directed effort; it lacks the seminal power of large suggestiveness. Once a soul yields itself to its influence, one may foretell its line of development with some degree of certainty; there will be less of the surprising, less of that bewildering but promiseful multiplicity of development which follows preaching

of the more implicit and suggestive type, preaching that does not seek to impress its mark so deliberately.

Yet what fine, noble, strong preaching it is! How admirably the round, full voice, and dignified style match the message! How unforced and luminous are the illustrations, how competent the theological framework, how quietly potent the spiritual interpretation! Sometimes the soul is taken to those green pastures and still waters where it is gently restored and almost imperceptibly built up into strength and effectiveness. Or, again, we walk beneath the quiet stars and intimations of eternal destiny flow into our mind. Or we find ourselves in an armoury and are equipped against our day of battle. Or, sitting round a cheery fireside, we listen to shrewd and homely counsel, or to the expert talk of a great organizer upon social and financial problems. And through it all rings the note of comfort—not of mere sentimental commiseration and cheer, but of the consolation which wipes away the tear to let the pilgrim see the path the better, and which puts a song into his mouth that he may beguile the sad, hard hours for others as well as for himself: the comfort, in a word, that spells strength. And in an age in which the soul's first feeble flutterings towards God come not by way of a conviction of sin or a craving for perfection, but by way of that helpless weariness and dejection which attack the strongest on life's high road—that bitter inadequacy to the burden which seems to be the modern soul's Gethsemane—such preaching from the lips of a master has a unique value. No one who knows the need of the age will wonder at its popularity; no one who

can recognize valid, unpretentious, painstaking art will deny that it fully deserves all the appreciation that is showered upon it. A singularly rich endowment, borne on the pillars of solidity and clarity, is manifest in Mr. Jones's utterance, and for practical effectiveness along his own line he stands unsurpassed.

VII

Rev. P. T. FORSYTH, M.A., D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF HACKNEY COLLEGE, LONDON

Dr. Forsyth is emphatically a theologian. Had his lot been cast in Germany, he would have stepped straight from the student's bench into the lecturer's chair and thence into the professor's, there to view the world for the rest of his days from behind the rampart of his "Pult" and to wage war upon the occupants of other "Pulte" who happened to attack his pet theory or hypothesis. Being born and trained in Britain, where the fact of an apprenticeship in practical pastoral work saves us from the bane of the professional theologian, he is still a pastor, takes a keen interest in the work and worship of the Church, and uses platform and press to worry the average man who cannot agree with him for his soul's good. We may fling charges of *odium theologicum*, intolerance, and undue assumption of authority at his head; but the most incensed would infinitely prefer these evils in their worst form to the moral and spiritual obtuseness, that "acquired stupidity of the schools," which may go with speculative intrepidity and stupendous learning in a certain type of the professional mind.

The general public thinks to know its great men by their mannerisms of speech and thought, and Dr. Forsyth affords a good many such handles for the casual mind to clutch at. His persistently anti-

thetical and at times cryptic style; his smart and merciless characterization; his exaggerated emphasis upon certain theological aspects; his creation of a distinctly Forsythean phraseology: all these stare us in the face at first sight and delude us into thinking we know him. Again, certain traditions have gathered round him. His masterful theological influence is supposed to act like a steam roller upon his unfortunate students, who, after being sufficiently flattened, are sent forth like sheets of postage stamps to be torn off one by one and stuck on to the churches which had the kindness to call them (the metaphors are mixed, but one hesitates to "edit" so memorable a *dictum*). The same somewhat truculent theological imperiousness is supposed to thrust out of the circle of his friendship all who do not subscribe to at least the italicized portions of his books, preference being given to those who can repeat them from memory. Adding this legendary and mythical material to the authentic superficial characteristics, one may get a very fair picture of Dr. Forsyth as he appears to the non-Forsythean imagination.

To get within sight of the real Forsyth one should begin by hearing him preach. The experiment may result either in a very poor opinion of his preaching powers, or in a very deep and poignant impression; in both cases alike it will go to shatter the traditional conception of the preacher. One may find him not only somewhat lengthy and diffuse, but even a little "slow." One may tire of the gentle but incisive and insistent quality of his voice, of the monotonous beating in of one idea in a hundred verbal forms, of the somewhat meticulous exactitude of definition which

breaks the charm of the finest passages, of a certain implication of impatience with a generation whose intelligence demands such a laboriously explicit definition of meaning. And one may never get beyond this impression of a laboured and somewhat trying, though undeniably massive and thoughtful, treatment. But to many there will suddenly come through the grey atmosphere a purple glory, and from that day onwards Dr. Forsyth's utterances, whether they agree with them or not, will stand invested with a spiritual magnificence so imperial that where they are compelled to differ from him it will be with a reluctance and a regret born of homage to a mind whose ways, however impossible for their feet, lead to the stars.

To find matter for dissent in Dr. Forsyth's theological position, even as it emerges in a single sermon, is easy. He bears the stamp of his development upon him. The aftermath of a great theological recoil still vibrates through almost every utterance of his, and often gives his words a sharper edge than he intends. He has paced the wilderness of rationalism, and the taste of its aridity has not left his palate. He has been immersed in the enervating, tepid mist of a sentimental and domestic conception of the Fatherhood of God, and, emerging bankrupt, embraced the sternness of the Cross till the nails entered his very soul never to be pulled out again. And some of us who listen to him grow impatient at his one-sided insistence upon the forensic and judicial elements in God at the expense of the affectionately intimate and sympathetic. For our experience is not his. We have never basked in a facile and idyllic domesticity of religious conception such as he was sucked into in those days. To

many of us a brutal experience of the hard contradictions of life has made the thought of God as a loving, understanding, solicitous Spirit infinitely harder to come at than the stiffest forensic theory of the Atonement, and our faith in a Divine Fatherhood has come not by the easy consent of our romantic hearts, but as by blood. But in our subjective protest against what is an undeniably one-sided presentation, we are apt to forget that what may be called the Forsythean reaction has contributed more, perhaps, than any other single influence to the truer understanding and the deeper interpretation of that very Fatherhood which is central to our faith, and has saved it from a hysteria of pious sentiment.

In not a few ways Dr. Forsyth has made a contribution to theological thought and religious life which must appeal to all earnest minds, whether in consonance with his position or not.

First and foremost, he has recaptured a sense of the soul's tragedy and passion and poignant splendour for our conception of religion. No one can listen to him even once without catching the note of revolt against the conventionality and mediocrity of our average religious life. For his deep, uncompromising vision of the abyss that yawns beneath the feet of respectable "Christian culture," and of the overwhelming cost of the Grace by which we are "scarcely saved," he might be called the Ibsen of the pulpit. I have only heard one other preacher of this searching and revealing type—the late Professor A. B. Davidson. Unlike Dr. Forsyth in almost every way, utterly divergent in temperament, sharply contrasting in style and presentation, there was in his

preaching also an almost torturing sense of the power that purges by terror and pity, of a salvation wrought out by God in immeasurable travail and entered into by man maimed and halting. In Professor Davidson, indeed, that passionate apprehension of the things by which men live was so deeply inherent and intimate, and so closely overlaid with the integument of a high, proud reticence, that it demanded a moment of almost equal passion in the hearer for its recognition. In Dr. Forsyth it is far more explicit, and far more immediate in its appeal. It has hands to grip. It consciously urges itself upon the mind and challenges the hostile temper. Certain it is that no one who has listened to these two men with his whole soul will be likely thereafter to recline upon the conventionalities of religion with an easy conscience, or view Christianity as a convenient invention for making life beautiful and enjoyable.

Coming to a generation which swayed blithely upon the crest of that laughing blue wave of religious inspiration we call the Galilean Gospel, Dr. Forsyth's instant sense of the terror of our mortal, moral strife—his tragic and catastrophic view of life and destiny—made him a piper to whom the children of the market-place refused to dance. In the name of "brightness"—that modern religious fetish which is so strangely commensurate with the disappearance of spiritual joy—we have adjured him not to darken our sky and drench the daisies in blood. Yet one sometimes wonders if our sky would not be the clearer to-day and our flowers more abundant, had we welcomed the darkness that purges by pity and terror. For the wave of naïve gladness has ebbed, leaving the sterile

and sickly deposit of an easy-going belief in a Christ who is little more than a minister to human frailty and convenience. The fear of the pagan, who enjoyed life with trembling lest the jealous gods might see his happiness and take revenge, might not unfairly be reckoned nobler than the current religious *insouciance* which makes Christianity little more than a charming device for enabling us to enjoy the best things of life without any fear at all. Dr. Forsyth has reminded us these last twenty years *that there is something to fear*, and, allowing for temperamental sombreness, we had done well to listen to him more earnestly for the simple reason that it is true. There is, as Mr. Chesterton has brought home to us, nothing quite so dangerous as just to be alive, and Dr. Forsyth's reiterative insistence upon the right to fear and tremble is not obscurantism or theological jargon; it is *a recall to reality*.

At a time when the health of the Church was seriously threatened by a morbid revolt against the authority of the trained expert and the consequent invasion of the religious amateur, Dr. Forsyth stood uncompromisingly for the demand of a high standard of competence from those who would teach and lead. In this he struck a note to which all theological parties should equally respond. If theological conservatism has suffered from the ignorant propaganda of unscholarly and conceited Bible-thumpers, theological liberalism has equally suffered at the hands of uninformed and arrogant purveyors of amateur heresies, while both alike have been injured by a type of theologising which is based on little more than the approximations and *aperçus* of subjective piety. It is largely

owing to Dr. Forsyth's insistent demand for professional competence that we are less at the mercy of men who talk "without their book" to-day than we were yesterday.

And in his unpopular view of the Church as first Holy and Catholic and only then propagandist and philanthropic, as first redeemed and then missionary, Dr. Forsyth has also spoken a liberating word to men of all parties. After a period of sanguine organization and aggression, we are beginning to turn weariedly to the sources of our experience and strength and even more to the foundations of our existence, and are once more approximating to a spiritual conception of the Church as the Bride and Body of Christ.

There is no living theologian whose work has more vitality and verve than that of Dr. Forsyth, or who opens more rich and rewarding vistas of thought to the serious student. None perhaps has brought so deep and experimental an insight to the central problem, or provided so many elements of constructive value. But to a multitude who cannot appreciate his theological greatness he is, above all, a seer who has opened holden eyes to that mystery of Grace to which the deepest heart of man will ever vibrate.

VIII

Rev. J. WARSCHAUER, M.A., D.Phil.

MINISTER OF HORTON LANE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BRADFORD

A SOMEWHAT grim, square church, giving no foothold to religious sensuousness. In the pews a congregation of typical, intelligent, practical, resolute-looking men and women—North of England unmistakably, and Yorkshire at that—the type to which ethical preaching makes the surest appeal, and which finds it easier to work than to pray, to listen to a sermon than to worship, to think than to love. In the pulpit a black-gowned, scarlet-hooded preacher of calm aspect and round, smooth voice with a touch of *hauteur* in its cool inflections. Unequivocally modern in thought and temper, with the intellect predominant, and with a somewhat ruthless power of analysis never out of evidence, he seems at first sight to lack both prophetic fire and evangelic sweetness; his immediate appeal is to the restless, questing mind which, having beaten itself sore against the bars of an antiquated orthodoxy, escapes only to find itself straying in the uncharted desert of rationalism. In the devotional part of the service his poised, measured accents, entirely reverent but entirely dispassionate also, convey an impression of coldness; in the sermon a certain veiled fire of spiritual intensity frays the hard edges of his thought and warms his clear, incisive utterance.

His sermons cover a wide range. Often they are

apologetic and controversial, and an intellectual sword-edge of keen and well-tempered quality makes quick, clean work, or a long solid wedge of cogent and lucid reason touched by spiritual emotion is driven right home. Sometimes they are didactic, affording wisely-prepared approaches to critical questions or theological issues to the modern man in the pew. Sometimes, again, one is entranced by a characteristically clear and delicate appreciation of the Evangelic spirit, by a sudden unveiling of the hidden way, an unexpected slip through the stile of thought into the misty meadows of the soul's own country. On such occasions one realizes that his is not only a mind of rare flexibility and grasp, but a subtle and complex spiritual personality which only finds a very partial expression along the more habitual lines of his ministry.

Dr. Warschauer is a controversialist *par excellence*, and from deliberate choice, in days when the path of the controversialist is beset by the thorns and thistles of the popular reaction against the vicious polemic of yesterday. On the face of it, the modern attitude towards religious controversy has some sound justification. Controversy, even at its best and highest, is sown with every eventuality of evil. The truth of God tends to lose something of its pure and winsome lustre when flashed back from the polemic sword-blade, and men do not often gather the fruits of the Spirit from the tree of even righteous contention. Yet the attitude is weak at the root and often unconsciously insincere. We do not really dislike a sharp and honest fight. When some skilled controversialist has dealt a few clean, telling

blows on the right side—by which, of course, we mean our side—we applaud him in our hearts, though we may criticize him in the newspapers. Not being able to find any flaw in what is said, we often take refuge in deprecating the spirit in which it was said. And while such an attitude is quite sincere in individual cases, taken collectively it marks the somewhat cowardly and less than candid temper of an age which seeks to escape honest committal by waxing sentimental on the subject of *odium theologicum*.

A clear, unhesitating discernment of the crux of a situation is perhaps Dr. Warschauer's chief asset. One has never known him fail to bring order out of chaos by forcing a clear issue or by rescuing the real point of discussion from an entanglement of irrelevancies. We suffer largely from blurred boundary lines and obscured crises, and the lust for reconciliation and mediation which has afflicted our preaching and teaching these last twenty years has issued in what practically amounts to the position of Montaigne's pious but tender-hearted old lady who burnt one candle for St. Michael and another for the poor old dragon. Our supreme need is not so much for a controversy which settles questions (does any controversy ever settle?) as for one which sharpens our sense of the thing at stake and snatches us clean out of the warm and soaking intellectual mist in which real differences vanish into a general and meaningless agreement. To such a task Dr. Warschauer brings a unique equipment. Absolute calmness; a dry and level way of seeing; mental acuteness and incisiveness, perfect sureness of grip; superlative neatness and effectiveness of phrase: above all, a

really intimate and competent knowledge, not only of his immediate subject, but of the lie of the whole coherent field. His controversial articles are models of their kind—the last word, one may say, in that crisp and mordant *genre*. Now and again smart things are said with too obvious a gusto; but, taken as a whole, he stands *facile princeps* in an entirely honourable and highly important field. To select an example of the characteristic power of these necessarily ephemeral, but none the less valuable, utterances is not easy. Here is one which exhibits the popularity of his appeal as well as its shrewd flavour:

"'We accept,' you say, 'the methods of the Higher Criticism, and only differ from its results.' Substitute 'chemistry' for 'criticism,' and all that is involved becomes immediately obvious. Accept and apply the methods, and the results will take care of themselves, even to the point of exploding the most formal and measured protest."

Dr. Warschauer's books have the same note of competence, the same sureness and saliency, and the same stamp of a wide culture as his articles. They are less perfect, as must be expected in these days of high pressure, when books have to be written in snatches amid the endless petty demands and trivial interruptions of an ever more highly complicated professional routine: less perfect, that is, in form, not in the thoroughness and precision of thought. Most readers will award the prize to his latest book, "What is the Bible?"—a book marked by a knowledge not only wide but most perfectly orientated and related. Others will prefer "Jesus: Seven Questions"

—an ideal book to give to a man who takes either his orthodoxy or his heterodoxy too seriously. In this book we have a theologian, himself not a rationalist, combating one rationalism by another with consummate skill and adroitness. It may not satisfy us, or take us much nearer to understanding a somewhat baffling theological personality; but it will convince us that Dr. Warschauer has an individual contribution to make to apologetic literature, using that term in the widest sense, and that he has the word for the modern man in a strait betwixt rationalism and obscurantism. For my own part I am not ashamed to prefer a small and somewhat hurriedly written book—"The New Evangel"—to them all. In it the controversialist merges in the preacher; in it, too, of all his books he does justice to the Evangelic spirit which is his in an unsuspected degree, to the eye which not only sees the beauty of Jesus, but sees it beautifully.

Dr. Warschauer strikes one as a man whom it is extremely difficult to know in spite of a superficial communicativeness, but even a casual view reveals far more depth and sweetness and poignancy of spiritual insight than can ever emerge on the controversial platform or find its way into books. At times he brandishes his polemic sword with a touch of swagger. At times he is too apt to submit miracles of faith to the standard of a British jury. But overarching all that may be vulnerable to criticism is an element of prophetic vision which has never yet quite come into its own.

IX

Rev. LEN G. BROUGHTON, M.D., D.D.

MINISTER OF CHRIST CHURCH, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON

When Dr. Broughton accepted the call to Christ Church, a friend of mine expressed the fervent wish that the Doctor might be given sufficient wisdom and tact not to irritate and offend sensitive modernists who might happen to stray into his church and to whom the enunciation of the old shibboleths is so peculiarly distressing. This friend, like many of his type, suffers from a particularly obstinate form of unconscious narrowness. It would not occur to him to pray that Mr. R. J. Campbell might have sufficient grace not to trample on the cherished convictions of some stray evangelical of the old school who might mistake the City Temple for the Metropolitan Tabernacle. In his private and secluded heart he believes that old-fashioned evangelicals have really no right to exist; if they insist on cumbering the earth, they have certainly no right to feel jarred by anything they hear. To put a frank edge to it, only modernists have the right either to offend or to be offended.

Meanwhile Dr. Broughton took the pulpit of Christ Church, declared from it that the soul which is separated from Christ is doomed to an endless hell, to mention only one of his old-fashioned shibboleths,

and implied more than once that he held the Bible to be verbally inspired from Genesis to Revelation and that he believed in a personal devil. He preaches the old evangelical orthodoxy, preaches it frankly, simply, dogmatically; and although, no doubt, many a stray hearer of liberal views has gone away sorrowful if not angry, the skies have not fallen, and Christ Church is filling up at the most gratifying rate. As a matter of fact, the religious world is not composed exclusively of modernists. There are thousands upon thousands of intelligent and loyal Christian folk who find secure anchorage in the old beliefs, and the narrowness we are so fond of stigmatizing as the unpardonable sin is not confined to them, but resides very largely also in the modernist zealots who deem it their duty to stamp the new truth down these old-fashioned people's throats with their boots, thus driving them either into sore unsettlement and doubt or into a bitter fanaticism. If the modern disease of trying to make people liberal by ridicule and invective continues, we shall see "orthodoxy hunts" in lieu of heresy hunts, and one rather fears the new narrowness will be worse than the old. We already have a type of liberalist who will hob-nob with the secularists of the distinctly blasphemous order, but cannot keep his temper with a sincere and humble Christian who happens still to believe in the unity of Isaiah. When will we learn that the only hope of Liberalism is in being liberal? Dr. Broughton has a message for that large section of people which as yet can see no thorns and stumbling stones in the old paths, and he must be judged by his inspiring and reinforcing influence uopn his own special con-

stituency, and not by his inevitably irritative effect upon casual visitors of more modern outlook.

For a man of over fifty to embark upon a forlorn hope immediately after a long spell of arduous and devitalising work is one of those fine, brave things which set one's blood a-thrill even though one's pedestrian judgment pronounces them pure folly. Something more than a quixotic charm clings about the graceful, attenuated figure of this great inspirer and organizer. For he does not merely ride against the mist to tackle a dimly discerned foe. He has counted the cost, weighed every jot and tittle of the hardship and risk, and pondered it long and calmly. He not only knows what he is up against in the way of financial and administrative difficulties; he knows also that the people of England are less readily won to new schemes and big crusades than their more easily fired American brethren. Yet he stands fronting the situation with characteristic zest and nerve, with that peculiarly American energy which is made up of weariness and unquenchable vitality, a fiery spark embedded in grey ash. He looks jaded and a little sad as he stands in the pulpit, but scarcely has he begun to speak when one is conscious of the electric thrill of a wonderful *élan vital.* A man who is like a live wire can afford to "talk big"—he is a dozen Christian hospitals and other big schemes made flesh. He is manifestly impulsive and explosive. He is more than likely to commit a few errors of judgment before very long. But one thing is sure: he will *do* things, whether wise or otherwise. He is no mere talker, no dealer in empty promises. He will try to do all he says, and if not all, then as much

as ever he can. And so one's first impression is a solid and reassuring one; if we cannot agree with him we can trust him, which is far better.

Dr. Broughton is essentially a lay preacher. He looks the layman, every inch of him, and his sermons do not belie the impression. Standing straight, but unassuming, in the low pulpit of Christ Church, clad in a correct frock coat, with a white flower in his buttonhole, and with the taut and well-turned-out look of a man who knows the value of appearance, he might be a West-end consultant. And he preaches like a medical man, *i.e.*, with a certain characteristic dogmatism and literalism, a starkly uncompromising, assured way of settling debatable points, and a perilously articulate and explicit handling of difficult themes. Why doctors should carry the idiosyncrasies of the religious lay mind to the point of exaggeration I do not know. The fact remains that they seem to find it extraordinarily difficult to introduce into religion the modern scientific spirit which governs their professional life, and it is significant that Plymouthism has an unusually large percentage of medical men among its adherents. Dr. Broughton, in spite of a true instinct for oratory and the mingled humour and pathos that go to capture the universal human heart, suffers from the limitations of his type. It is not his orthodoxy, not even his literalism, that stands in the way of larger things, but a certain dogmatic finality, an almost morbid lust for definition and explicit statement; above all, a lack of wistfulness and awe in the presence of inscrutable mysteries which precludes his appealing to men of finer temper and subtler soul—men of culture, perhaps, but as

often plain working folk in whose hearts God has set a deep sense of the mysteriousness of life. He is so sure, so very sure, and most sure of all in places where dogmatic certainty precludes vision and drowns the voice of inspiration. That is the one vitiating touch about his richly endowed nature, and he shares it with many a modernist preacher—it is the monopoly of no school or platform.

But that he has a magnificent endowment, an opulent personality, no one can doubt. He has a very winsome, clear, carrying voice, with a power of explosive shouting which is effective if not used too often. He has the dramatist's talent. He can make a story live and tell at the very point where he wants it to tell. His gift of selecting the things that make for strong and immediate effect delivers any audience into his hand for the time being, even though it revolt when the spell of voice and temperament is withdrawn. His magnificent optimism is contagious. There is nothing ignoble or contracted about his conception of the Christian life. He would have the Church touch individual and communal life at every point. Evangelical as he is, he does not shrink from the reproach of being dubbed a political parson, so long as he can take his Elijah's share in sweetening the stream of civic and national affairs. The blend of social passion and evangelical consecration is very attractive. At one moment he will be hurling stinging words against some abuse which the conventional evangelical would not wish so much as to be mentioned within church walls. The next he is telling a typically American story—frankly evangelistic and sentimental, and, of course,

entirely individualistic—as only he knows how to tell it, with strong melodramatic effect. One disapproves, yet one listens with something like a catch in one's throat. And shining through all his gifts of oratory and presentation, eclipsing all his dogmatism and literalism, is the goodwill of a thoroughly lovable and loving soul. Of acerbity, *odium theologicum,* or any other kind of malevolence there is not an ounce in his composition. It is a pain to have to disagree with so guileless and well-wishing a prophet. One eagerly turns from his theology to his personality, and rejoices that so wholesome and inspiring a force has come to South London.

Dr. Broughton has abandoned himself to the vice of anecdotage. Some of his sermons are little more than strings of stories; and while the method suits the half-educated and half-developed, it is scarcely the kind of meat by which men of robust mental fibre are attracted and on which weak men thrive and grow strong. He also has next to no exegetical instinct, and yields to the typical lay vice of using texts as mottoes to hang his matter on. And yet one hardly wishes to criticize. For a ministry which by such means can do the work Dr. Broughton has accomplished in Atlanta, and can make the magnificent start he is making in London, must be allowed to work out its own salvation in its own way. That way may not be ours. But it is trodden with commanding force of individuality, and we shall watch its progress with sympathetic and teachable minds.

X

Rev. FRANK Y. LEGGATT, M.A.

MINISTER OF CHORLTON ROAD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MANCHESTER

It is the misfortune of not a few modern preachers that they have not the patience—some would say the courage, and it takes a good deal of courage in these hustling days—to possess their souls. Mr. Leggatt had not only the patience and the courage from the very start; he also seems to have been blessed with a set of deacons who guarded their minister against the encroachment of petty calls with an almost passionate solicitude. Thus it came about that he fell ever more deeply in love with the foolishness of preaching, toiled at it with the fine leisureliness of him who believeth, and never found himself in the humiliating position of having to speak out before he had thought out. Thus it happened also that he wrote and committed to memory and declaimed, when he should have spoken as straight and spontaneously as he knew how, and that he found time to model himself on Dr. John Hunter, where a little wholesome hurry might have pitchforked him into finding himself sooner than he actually did. Not that he ever was a mere copyist. He always gave us not only the truth, but his truth; but he gave it with a superfluity of rhetoric, the result of a native bent exaggerated by an overplus of leisurely care. His whole development raises the interesting question as to whether it is possible for a man to miss his soul by reason of too much leisure.

But Mr. Leggatt has found himself, and, if one may venture upon a guess, he has done so by discovering the liberating virtue of pastoral work. He once hinted at it in a sentence. "Visiting may not do the people much good, but it always helps the minister." He has boldly followed the unpopular road of the preacher who, through the changes and fluttering of modern life, keeps the old parish ideal in his heart, and through patient and serious contact with his people gains spiritual mass and momentum till, almost to his own surprise, he finds himself gripping reality with both hands and speaking forth the living Word. Whether he will ever be able to wholly rid himself of his incubus of rhetoric is doubtful; but whatever remains of it sinks into insignificance beside those elements of reality and sympathy which, even more than his undeniable power and freshness of thought, constitute him an arresting preacher.

Yet his appeal is not immediate. A large class of hearers may find him a little hard and cold. One of these told me that he was the most difficult man to talk to he had ever encountered. I had the pleasure of a talk soon afterwards, and found him quite the easiest of men to talk to, for the simple reason that he does not try to make conversation or be interesting. One wonders sometimes how gushing a preacher would need to be in order to convince some people that he has a heart hidden away somewhere. There are surprisingly few who seem to be aware that it is the man who carries the brimming cup that walks the most cannily. And Mr. Leggatt's cup is full to overflowing. His is a lambent intellectual and moral passion—a fire-edge too keen to be borne about unsheathed.

Three things emerge in almost every sermon. First of all, this vibrant under-note of passion. Then a practical and tender understanding of the sorrows and struggles of mankind. At one time it may be a deep, healing look into the heart that is flung back bruised and quivering by the hand of him for whom it spends itself in love and devotion. At another it rushes forth as indignant compassion for the many who are blanched by ill-requited toil, whose back is like to break beneath unjust burdens, who cry out of wrong and are not heard. Or again—and perhaps never so deep as at this point—it takes the shape of a vivid moral sympathy with the man who is baffled and all but beaten in the war from which there is no discharge, who thinks he has crushed the head of the beast only to see it rise again after years of grim struggle, and who is mauled to the dust at the very moment when he thought he had touched the stars. But these three elements do not manifest themselves in either emotional or vehement language. There is no flamboyancy, no gratuitous reiteration of sympathetic expressions—above all, no sentimental or impertinent personal inquisition. They are there plain enough for the man who needs them, but not vulgarly exaggerated to prick the jaded appetite of the casual hearer. A wholesome tonic astringency dominates all his speech. "Sea-braced" is the word for it, and one thinks of the difference between the cloying sweetness of the heather on inland hills and the sharp sweetness of the heather just a stance back from the sea. One is not surprised to hear that Mr. Leggatt was born and bred within reach of the running wave, and studied at St. Andrews University, where the rumour of the ocean

often makes a man deaf to the lecturer's voice, and where any soul with a drop of the salt in its make-up becomes thrall to the magic of the sea.

With all his leisured aloofness from the thousand and one preoccupations of modern church life, his rugged independence and his severe mental temper, Mr. Leggatt possesses many of the qualities that make for success in this pragmatic age of ours. He has "go," and plenty of it; sense, gumption, *nous*, call it what you will; a knack of clear, explicit statement; the power of summoning the blood; the level mind keeping firm in the saddle of reality, however daringly it rides. All these readily perceived and easily understood things are his, and having these he has come into his kingdom earlier than most. But through and under them there quivers a temperament which is not cast in the popular mould. There is the scholar's heart—that severity and fastidiousness of intellectual taste and aspiration which ever and anon make the practical routine and trivial detail work of the pastorate a galling yoke. There is also that mature and considered independence of thought which infallibly condemns to some degree of isolation, and prevents that facile immediacy of contact which spells popularity. This independence has saved him from a hundred weakening influences. It prevented the fact of his being discovered far too early in his career from deflecting the straight, clear line of a ministry which has steadily gained force and volume within its self-chosen circle, caring less and less for the demands of a volatile and casual religious public. It has also saved him from the fatal domestication of pastoral life, from becoming a mere waiter upon his

people's social convenience. He stands somewhat severe and self-contained, very much his own man, but still more the bondservant of the ideal which animates him. Not a "smiler," not an adroit purveyor of social amenities, not a ministerial stage-manager; but a man of keen, disciplined mind, of moral driving-power and individual temperament; a strong, reticent, self-balanced man, with something at once fiery and tender at the core of him.

Summing him up as a preacher, he is signally able and telling, with a strong line of his own and considerable vigour of thought. Will he stop short at that? If he does, it will be because he has somewhat too sure a knowledge of his powers and limitations. He seems to know exactly what he can do, and, aiming straight for that, he comes short of the prophet's crown. For the prophet was always the man who did what he knew he could not do and went where he did not want to go. In a short article on "Nature Worship," Mr. Leggatt lays it down that men only get what they are in search of and no more. Thank God that is not true, or else some of us must go beggared indeed. But this much is true: that he whose ability is the measure of his endeavour is likely to fall short even of that ability. To a preacher of so valid and disciplined a talent and of so lofty a temperament a vast land of promise lies open. Only he must go out, not knowing whither he goes.

XI

Rev. W. CHARTER PIGGOTT

SUPERINTENDENT OF WHITEFIELD'S CENTRAL MISSION, LONDON

DOWERED with a winsome and effective pen, Mr. Charter Piggott is a favourite preacher with many who have never come within sound of his voice. My own acquaintance with him began with the reading of an unpretentious little New Year's essay, entitled "To-morrow," which still impresses me as entirely characteristic of his thought and temperament. It is a simple and translucent bit of writing, lit up with occasional flashes of verbal cunning. Neither great in thought-stuff nor conspicuous for dynamic, it yet lays a certain haunting and invasive spell upon the heart—a spell as elusive and hard to define, and as potent, too, as that of the writer's pulpit personality. To read it is to have a very shrewd notion of what the spoken word of the preacher, at least in his quieter moods, is like. For preacher and writer are manifestly one in this case, and perhaps the greatest charm of Mr. Piggott's writing is that, with all its indubitable literary grace, it is the direct utterance of a spiritual temperament brooding against eternal mysteries.

Something that cannot be labelled with a cut-and-dried word, something that evades every attempt to capture it, spreads a veil of enigmatic fascination over Mr. Piggott's preaching. On the surface there

is a beautiful stillness, a delicate reticence which refrains from an explicit and immediate appeal, a quiet flashing of golden threads of thought and verbal magic. There is intellectual force of a steady, unobtrusive type, a faculty of reasoned and closely concatenated argument, the evidence of wide and well-digested reading. The average hearer misses the characteristic clash of impact, the ringing blow which vibrates through the consciousness as the hammer of the preacher's personality falls sharply upon the anvil of his audience. The hand seems to swing the hammer, poising it delicately in mid-air, letting it fall at last with true, precise aim; only—it makes no sound. It might be the swing of a ghostly arm in a dream at dead of night. But to the mind that follows the preacher more closely and sympathetically, most of all to the mind which has come not to observe and estimate but to receive, there comes, as the sermon proceeds, the intimation of a coy, low, persistent knocking at the gates of the soul which, sounding faint and far-away in the street or in the hall, booms like thunder upon the doors of the inmost room. The preacher has little to say to the outer attention and everything to the soul; and, making no effort to pierce the outer crust, he drops his seed, at random, as it were, and trusts that, being destined for the subsoil, to the subsoil it must in time come by the inevitable working of eternal law.

The shy and disciplined reticence which is so palpable a characteristic of Mr. Piggott is often taken as the evidence of a fastidious and fine-grained nature, cloistered within its own house of meditation and wincing away from contact with the rough, inquisitive,

explicit world. But a closer view dispels the illusion. That still small voice, deliberate, precise, alluring, with incisive sweetness and edged gentleness, spells not withdrawal but restraint. Its delicacy is not so much the expression of a fastidious temperament as of the wary, watchful soul, girt and self-balanced. It may deceive nine hearers out of ten; the tenth is almost sure to discern the vibrancy of passion beneath its smooth, shy cadence. The nine will be startled by the emergence of intense emotion, the intrusion of explosive force; the tenth will have looked for it before it came, and would have gone away disappointed had it failed to come. The nine will scan this quiet preacher with the calm voice and the guarded speech, and, wondering how he comes to be so, ask, "Tell me wherein thy strength lieth." The tenth will perceive his strength in the very qualities that conceal it from the nine. Mr. Piggott is by no means unpopular with the nine—his geniality and quick, discerning sympathy go to make him very welcome indeed—but he will always remain emphatically a preacher to the tenth; and one likes to think that his call to London means that there are still some tenth men left in this bustling, purblind city of ours, and that a few of them go to Whitefield's.

Mr. Piggott's quietness, then, is the quietness of restraint. That means that there is much to restrain. One divines a cup too full to be trippingly borne across the market-place, a steed too fiercely mettled to be ridden with a loose rein. He has more temperament than he can safely express, and herein lies the secret of that elusive and slightly enigmatic quality which makes it so hard to drop this preacher into

one or other of one's many pigeon-holes of appreciation. There is a suggestion of the palimpsest—the overlaying of an outleaping temper by a superimposed calm. If there is a weakness here, it is in the absence of that loose rein of perfect control, of that assured command of himself which gives a man the freedom of every stop and key of his nature as a master-player at ease with a great organ. The result is a lack of intimacy and directness. Where certain preachers of coarse and egotistical calibre gush out their private hearts in the pulpit, he uses a restraint which detracts from the inwardness of his approach. The result is a subtle form of self-consciousness which, while it has nothing in common with vanity or egoism, lays its own paralysing touch upon self-expression. One can imagine him at times mistaking his self-consciousness for his true self, and so going bereft of his highest potency. Given a more unreserved abandonment to his own vision, he would surprise even his most ardent admirers. Meanwhile his tense restraint (who was it called him "a flame in ice"?) gives a certain point and poignancy to his preaching and stirs the imagination. One divines large reserves and experiences the attraction of the unexplored.

At times Mr. Piggott charges directly up to the guns, and flings himself upon the perplexed and rebellious young mind of the age. His fresh, non-professional outlook, wise sympathy and "institutional" affinities give him an easy access to the average young person who has a more often acquired than innate prejudice against anything "parsonic." He has the reputation of being "quite refreshingly untheological"—a reputation which is all the more enviable for not being

strictly founded on truth. While there is little explicit trace of theological reading and thought in his preaching, theology of a valid kind is always somewhere in the solid background (where it should ever be kept), and now and then some hint of its existence—perhaps an unblushing reference to those despised creatures, the commentators—surprises the unwary. But, while he is by no means untheological in the sense of being a *dilettante* decrier of expert knowledge, he is an interpreter of life, not of dogma, and his intensely vital interest speaks to the young soul in love with life. Face to face with a Sunday evening audience of this half wistful, half rebellious character, the fire that smoulders beneath the glacial crust is liberated, and in that complete surrender to spiritual purpose the preacher comes to his kingdom. At first, all is smooth and genially lucid, abounding in subtle touches, luminous allusions and polished phrasing. It has a distinct literary flavour, and still more the sting of style ; in the choice and juxtaposition of words a refined and discriminating spirit is seen at work. As he goes on, thought and speech deepen ; there are hints of spiritual largeness and penetration, evidences of a tender understanding of human misery and failure, glimpses of a soul turned outward. Still it lacks abandonment to the supreme idea ; it seems as if the preacher cannot let his soul go, as if he hugged the shores of self-conscious reflection, fearing to launch forth upon the deep seas of spiritual passion. And then, just as one has decided that there will be no launching of the boat that day, she sails forth and the great waters bear her up and on. The voice gathers intensity, swells towards emotion.

The wistful eyes fill with a warm and penetrating light. The words fall quick and burning. There is an appeal, a flinging of the whole personality against the walls and fortifications that garrison the human heart. Perhaps the floods subside and the boat swims back into its harbourage in the end. Perhaps the sermon ends on the stormy note of a dramatic climax. At any rate, we have seen the floodgates open and are content.

At Whitefield's Mr. Piggott has every stimulus towards the fuller development and expression of that fiery centre of his personality in which his most impelling and contagious powers reside. There also he has not a few temptations to allow the finer fibres of his spiritual temperament to be dulled and roughened in the grim struggle with a city's callousnesses and rejections. What change this great London which plays such queer tricks with men will yet work in him, how much it will evoke, how much it will silence, who can tell? He stands at the threshold of a great metropolitan ministry, watchful and alert, sympathetic and earnest, a preacher of rare distinction who lacks very little to make him a preacher of effectual power.

XII

Rev. G. E. DARLASTON, M.A.

MINISTER OF CROUCH END CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, LONDON

"THERE'S nothing in the world quite so old-fashioned as the young minister of to-day," a church tramp and sermon-taster remarked to me recently. "And if one wants heresy, even of the mildest type, one simply daren't risk a man under forty nowadays."

There is a shrewd spice of truth in this *dictum*. The newest note in the modern ministry is a return to something very old, though certainly not "old-fashioned," for the simple reason that it has never yet been fairly tried. Viewed ecclesiastically, there is a return to the high and spiritual conception of the Church as the Body of Christ. We have in the past largely regarded the Church as the ancients regarded the world, when, to secure it safely in space, they rested it on the back of an elephant and placed the elephant upon the back of a stolid tortoise. We have grounded the Church upon the State, upon "the people's will," upon the ballot box, upon individual and collective pieties and aspirations, upon everything but its great law of gravitation—its eternal constitution and right in the mind of God and the heart of her Lord. To-day we are once again, after a long time, coming to realise that she was made first for Christ and not for the man in the street, and for the man in the street only because for Christ

and His redeemed kindred. "Why is the Church an old woman?" asked the Shepherd of Hermas, at the dawn of Church history. "Because," was the answer, "she was created first of all. On this account is she old. And for her sake was the world made." We are slowly coming to realise that to seek a guarantee for the Church in any created thing is to rest the weight of the world upon an elephant.

Congregationally speaking, the new note emerges in the re-discovery of the pastoral relationship. The sacredness and reality of the pastoral bond were not destroyed when the old relation of paternal authority on the one side and reverential obedience on the other was swept away in that great inevitable shaking of things that can be shaken in which the new spirit of our age was born. But for a space there seemed little room for it in the new order of things, and this loosening, if not losing, of the sense of pastoral responsibility is responsible for that decline of pulpit power about which there is so much irresponsible talk in these loquacious days.

In the pulpit itself the change jumps more palpably into the public eye. The period from which we are just emerging was characterized by a strange mixture of blurting, outspoken individualism and violent dogmatism and assumption of intellectual authority. Preachers not only spoke out their conjectures and speculations the moment they could get them into utterable shape, but they tended to label them as "the Truth," with a capital T, and to force them upon a dismayed and helpless people. To-day our young preachers have come to realize that there is nothing particularly brave

and distinguished in shocking elderly ladies and simple-minded Sunday-school teachers, and that there may live more faith in these imperfect creeds of ours than in three-quarters of the curious mental distemper called "honest doubt" by the persons who happen to catch it. The modern note is an endeavour, on the one hand, to present a positive and eternal message, and, on the other, to apply it more thoroughly and unflinchingly than ever before to the actual needs and problems of individual and social life. This change in the pulpit is determined by the change in the conception of the Church. If the Church be indeed the Body of Christ through which He still speaks, the infant theologian can no longer be allowed to use her members as a rubber ring to cut his teeth against.

Mr. Darlaston shows some of the most salient characteristics of the new Congregational type. Neat, taut, and entirely unclerical in dress; plain, unprofessional, and quietly forcible in speech, combining a deep sense of final issues with a practical sense of present need, he is in most things, good and less good, a typical University-trained Congregational minister of the new school. Individuality he has, but it does not lie on the surface or assert itself conspicuously, and is ever dominated by the unselfishness of the pastoral motive. A not unattractive combination of spiritual delicacy and high reserve with a certain robust forthrightness of attack is characteristic of him. He has forged his own sword; he will not hesitate to use it, and he knows that a clean cut heals the soonest. Yet after every lunge there is a back-wash of spiritual coyness. He may

want to smite, but he hates swagger and flourish. Once the sword has done its work it goes back to its sheath; no cutting of the air in bravado or self-congratulation. A bold militancy of Christian temperament is his, made winsome by the charm of an almost boyish zest; a deep-rooted dislike of publicity and a delicate sensitiveness of spiritual touch are also his, and the first is not likely to swamp the second. Many a preacher possessed of this double endowment has allowed his joy in the Holy War to betray him into the hands of publicity-mongers and religious stage-managers, ending with a fat album of press notices and a lean and coarse-fibred soul. Mr. Darlaston has not allowed the platform, the religious public, or the man in the street to force his hand, and has thus secured for himself an enviable immunity from a thousand vulgarising and sapping influences. His path may be, and very likely is, difficult; but it will always be straight.

Mr. Darlaston's virile and open-eyed reading of the challenge of modern life to Christianity has given him deserved prominence on the denominational platform. A paper on "The Challenge of Modern Life," read before the London Congregational Union, gave a strong impression of a man who has thought to purpose, and whose ambition is not to dazzle but to serve, to make a real personal contribution to the Church's solution of the problem. His utterance was carried by a deeply pondered conviction, and expressed in tense, forcible modern English, neither stilted nor slipshod. There is always a hint of fervid intensity in his voice, something of vehement emphasis in the gesture that underscores the points. Of oratory

there is little, though eloquence is not wanting; but one pays little heed to it under the influence of that rarest of things—the spiritual passion of a man who has never spilt his soul on trivial issues.

With the problem of the business man Mr. Darlaston has the keenest and frankest sympathy. He is not afraid to face the question of commercial morality. He knows he cannot solve it for the business man, and he tells him so. "The problem beats me," he says in effect. "My poor second-hand knowledge does not suffice for it. But it won't beat you experts. It's *your* problem, and it's yours to get helped through." But what help he can give he gives, and it represents hard thinking. "Commerce, which holds in one hand the slum and in the other the mission field"—the phrase, arrestingly spoken, bites into the commercial mind. "You may not see your way out, just as Paul, we may imagine, did not see his way out of the slave-system. But time is not a question; in your *thought* you may not allow any system to be permanent and sacrosanct which clashes with the sovereign will of God and the Christian ideal of life." That bites deeper still, touching the quick of the diseased moral nerve.

That the Church of Christ has come to a blank *impasse* he frankly admits. No confident optimism there, no cheerful lies about our being "stronger than ever," but no capitulation either: simply a stern, honest facing up to the difficulty, and giving it its full weight and its right name. Then, in a passionate flash of spiritual conviction, he re-names the *impasse* Opportunity. Here lies the characteristic note of all his preaching—a supreme confidence in

the power of faith, not to blind the eye to a problem or to remove it, but to wrest glory from the dust and draw triumph out of shame:

"They [the Church's prophets and the Church's Saviour] faced their Red Sea. They risked everything on the inviolability of Jerusalem. They set their faces as a flint towards the Cross. . . . When they could get no further, they said, 'Here *stand* I, so help me, God'; that is, they sprang into the *impasse*, and with mighty faith stood there and wouldn't budge. That is how new eras have been born. If past history is anything to us, this is assured: the *impasse* became the place of communion. It was the gate to the Unseen. It was the scene of the miracle."

It has been the tragedy of the modern Church that she has thought to see God by turning a blind eye to the *impasse*. To look sheer, naked, overwhelming obstacles in the face is the first step towards the recovery of her ancient power, and men like Mr. Darlaston are helping towards this consummation.

PRESBYTERIAN

I

Rev. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D., LL.D.

PRINCIPAL OF NEW COLLEGE, AND SENIOR MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S UNITED FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH

SITTING one drowsy summer afternoon in the dim heart of a dense wood, I idly lifted a great stone which lay half embedded in the moist earth. Instantly a multitude of slimy, crawling creatures scurried hither and thither, seeking refuge from the light in holes and cracks. "That," said the friend who was with me, somewhat ambiguously, "is exactly like Alexander Whyte." Noting my look of bewilderment, he hastened to explain that what he meant was that Dr. Whyte did for the human heart what I had done with the stone: he let the light pour upon it, and exposed its crawling nastinesses with the ruthlessness of the sunlight. He forthwith went on to criticise Dr. Whyte for lifting the stone too often, without adequate reason and with unnecessary gusto, and for insisting that every stone covered an equal number of equally nasty things. To expose the dreary failures and slimy meannesses of human nature was unholy work, he contended, or at least as idle and useless as my lifting of the stone had been. But I scarcely listened. The aptitude of the picture had struck home to me, and given me the clue to a personality whose enigmatic face had often teased my mind.

Those who know Edinburgh society, and who knew Dr. Whyte in his prime, insist that what made him

a power in the land was his magnificently fearless exposure of the shams and vices of respectability. One hearer remembers him pausing before a certain passage in a certain sermon, and telling his great and distinguished congregation how the devil was at his elbow urging him not to read the passage, but how he defied him and meant to read every single word of it. And he did read every single word, and it fell like flakes of fire in its remorseless realism and unflinching plainness of speech—the most audacious, the most scathing denunciation such a gathering had ever had to listen to. Herein lay his strength, said the narrator. I tried to believe it, but was not satisfied even then. I had heard many eloquent and intrepid denunciators of society, especially in Roman Catholic pulpits, who were not one whit behind Dr. Whyte in burning sincerity and pitiless analysis, but I could not persuade myself that there was much real strength in such preaching. The very society it castigated so mercilessly crowded to it, listening with visible gusto and finding in it not much more than a fillip to whip its jaded soul into something like sensibility, a biting condiment which gave sharpness and zest to the dish of indulgence. And though it may be granted that Dr. Whyte excels all these other denunciatory prophets, yet his greatness lies scarcely in this. It is found rather in the fact that while he castigates the sins of society, it is not with society primarily that he has to do, but with the individual heart ; that private and secluded heart which writhes and winces at the exposure of its hidden sore and rottenness, where a wholesale denunciation of the social inferno in which it moves leaves it pricked but fundamentally whole,

and more often pleasantly piqued than deeply stabbed. As he speaks each individual hearer sees his heart's fibre quivering beneath a burning glass, sees the stone it has so carefully placed pushed aside, and the hundred and one crawling, poisonous beasts, whose very existence it has forgotten, dart hither and thither in a vain panic to escape. And the preacher who can thus strip and dissect the individual human heart is a power for life or for death. He may be a searing iron which by repeated cauterization induces a deadly callousness from which there is no recovery. He may be a sword sharp to the dividing asunder of bone and marrow but with healing in its keen-edged blade. What he will never be is a mere fascination, a fashionable pastime, a sensational experience for the *blasé* sermon-taster.

Dr. Whyte has often been called the last of the Puritans, yet he is not entirely or purely Puritan in temper. His acute and often morbid anatomy of sin places him in line with a mystic and Catholic tradition. So St. Teresa, in her inimitably dainty satire, wrote of the human heart. So William Law, whose roots lay in Catholicism rather than in Protestantism, wrote in his pellucid and keen-edged manner. So Jacob Behmen, whose spiritual and metaphysical ancestry was Alexandrine, wrote concerning certain aspects of human nature. So also Bishop Andrewes, and Thomas à Kempis, and a long succession of lesser known Catholic writers explored the intricate and baffling human heart. That whole tracts of such analysis are also found in the Puritans no one would seek to deny, but they are not characteristically Puritan; they belong elsewhere—to a mind and a

temper which are not the mind and the temper of New Testament Christianity. Of all the Puritans John Bunyan is Dr. Whyte's immediate affinity. Only a man whose mind is steeped in the "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Holy War" can preach as he preaches, and it is Bunyan's Puritan strain in the non-Puritan—one had almost said non-evangelical—web of his religious temperament that has gained him the title of the last of the Puritans. To call his religious temperament non-evangelical may seem wide of the mark, considering his reiterative insistence upon the very fundamentals of evangelical doctrine, notably upon justification by faith alone, and in face of the radical and explicit way in which, in his inimitable "Appreciations," he joins issue with non-Puritan and Catholic minds. Thus, in a strong and cogent criticism of Cardinal Newman, he points out that this great saint and matchless preacher never really got his divorce from the dominion of the law; that to the end his Maker, Law-giver and Judge was more self-luminous to him than his Redeemer; that he makes Moses speak in the accents of Jesus, but it is Moses all the time, with his whips and scorpions hidden away under his Gospel dress. Throughout his preaching and writing Dr. Whyte is ever the defender of the evangelical faith. Not once does he meet the perplexed and bankrupt mind with reassuring reminders concerning the *anima naturaliter Christiana* which nowadays is taken for granted as the common birthright of every casual rationalist. Not once does he glorify the unconscious Christianity of the man who does not believe but is rich in good works, or console the anguished penitent by a reference to the

law of healing and compensation which nature exhibits, or with the practical sufficiency of a good will and a pure intention. And yet there are so many ways of dressing Moses in Gospel robes, and one wonders if Dr. Whyte's form of evangelicalism is not one of them. For in studying those opulent and magnificent discourses of his, so full of vital impulse and searching power, one comes upon a subtle legalism below the sound form of Gospel words—the legalism that would take every soul through the horrors of a deep, detailed, torturing look into the most nauseating chambers of human nature as a condition of finding the great salvation of God, and would insist upon an explicit realization of the Puritan doctrine of justification by faith as the only refuge from guilt and despair. Here lies his departure from the original Gospel, here also the secret of his strange and compelling power. He does not dissect and expose by way of exhibiting his marvellous gift, or as a drastic means to arrest and apprehend certain of the careless and case-hardened. He impales the quivering, diseased mass upon a high spike, and cries on every mother's son to look upon it for his healing; to look hard and long and unflinchingly, for there is life in a look. So Moses held up the serpent in the wilderness; so Christ does *not* hold up any but His own meek and lowly heart.

The preacher who holds up the naked human heart only to dazzle his hearers with a sense of his own penetration, or to pierce through their sluggish apathy, fails to make more than a fleeting impression. The effect is unpleasant rather than searching. One is left irritated, not convinced; humiliated and mortified, not humble and penitent. But he who,

like Dr. Whyte, makes self-knowledge a condition of knowing one's Saviour, and with ruthless hand holds one's shuddering heart up to the mirror, saying, Herein is help and in this bitterness is healing, smites with a terror which is more than natural cowardice, and which results either in a violent and resentful reaction, or in a conversion after Dr. Whyte's rigid method. The man who thus looks into his own heart before he has looked upon the face of Jesus Christ will, if converted, almost invariably tend to a type of Christianity to which Christ is little more than the pivotal figure in a scheme of salvation, and for which Jesus of Nazareth need never have lived and taught. Nowhere does this emerge so clearly as in Dr. Whyte's own book on "The Walk, Conversation, and Character of Jesus Christ our Lord." There we find ourselves contemplating the words and acts of Jesus, but the atmosphere is not the atmosphere of the Gospels. We are in a different world—in a more sophisticated, legalistic, judicial world than the world of Jesus. His very words take on a different sound, are interpreted through another medium than their characteristic fragrance, breathe a different spirit. It is Paul over again, and a decidedly Whyte-ian Paul, with Moses somewhere in solution. But where the effect of such self-knowledge is not conversion, the final result may be the begetting of a bitter cynicism, a censorious temper, or a hard despair. For it is at all times a dangerous thing to look upon one's heart with eyes which have never met the eyes of the Lord Christ, and if there is anything which Dr. Whyte, with all his clear-eyed sagacity, has left out of account, it is that the wisdom of God sent the clement

and winsome Saviour, not into a world which knew its own sinful heart and was so prepared for His coming, but to a world whose sense of sin was all but dead, and which had to read its own misery, not through the vile heart of man, but in the sinless and loving heart of Christ.

And so Dr. Whyte stands before us as the stern prophet who has recalled the facile, superficial mind of a generation to the culpability and impotence of man. To carp at his exaggerations of the night-side of human nature shows a lack of proportion. No truth can ever be forced home without exaggeration, and the exceeding sinfulness of man is a truth which needed to be forced home at any cost. He has shattered complacency, pricked the bubble of a spurious optimism, and deepened the moral sense and revived a passion for holiness as few others. Through his wonderful Bible classes, with their almost world-wide membership, he has created an interest in great spiritual literature which will yet bear rich fruit, and restored a whole tract of priceless forgotten treasure to our use. In all things, good and not so good, he stands for that imperious tradition which out of Scots legalism and Catholic mysticism wove so regal and opulent a type of saintship, lacking only the wise foolishness and deep simplicity which are learnt in the school of Jesus, lacking, most of all, the love which in covering the multitude of sins reveals them more radically and savingly than the most searching exposure. The tradition is not dead yet; it has still a noble and salutary task to fulfil in a slack age. But one doubts if it will ever again find so commanding and lofty an exponent as Alexander Whyte.

II

Rev. JOHN KELMAN, M.A., D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S UNITED FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH

To accept a call to Free St. George's is no small matter, and no wonder Dr. Kelman hesitated before leaving his responsive student congregation at the New North Church to stand beside Dr. Whyte in the fierce light that beats back upon Scotland's premier pulpit from an illustrious past. There never was a time when the minister of Free St. George's was not a strong personality as well as a great preacher. Candlish and Dykes were more than strong personalities, indeed; they were great men, after a fashion of greatness that has all but vanished from among us. Principal Whyte's sombre and prophetic genius made a unique and tremendous impact upon the conscience of fashionable Edinburgh society; perhaps no preacher since John Knox ever crashed with such uncompromising force and candour into the corrupt respectabilities of a great city. To take one's place in such a succession is an honour which weighs most heavily upon the one most worthy of it.

Dr. Kelman came into his kingdom at the New North. He had started his career as assistant to George Adam Smith at Queen's Cross, Aberdeen, where, young as he was, he had made some little mark of his own by sheer force of temperament, and had been called thence to a quiet little parish in

Peterculter, where quiet days, going over like white clouds, were shared between hard reading and intimate pastoral work. Then came the call to the New North, with its bracing but stern prospect of sowing the good seed in that stoniest of stony soils—the grey, grim bit of Edinburgh that lies between the High Street and the Infirmary. But it was not to be a case of patient, assiduous seed-bearing after all. Just then a crisis had arisen, and the hour demanded a man. Dr. Kelman proved the man for the hour, and easily slipped into the place that waited for him. Henry Drummond had just died, and responsible men were on the look-out for someone to continue his work. Dr. Kelman seemed to be a likely man, and he was willing to make an adventure upon the students of Edinburgh. His sympathies and endowment marked him out for it, and soon the New North was packed with men of a Sunday night, and remained so to the end.

In those days there was all the charm of unexpectedness about Dr. Kelman. He brought to his task something of Browning's venturesome grip on life, and still more of Stevenson's delight in a "world that is full of a number of things." Here was one who, if he could not explain difficulties, would not shirk them; one who was not scared of pulling great handfuls of flowers because there might be nettles among them; above all, one who knew how to conduct a service that a fellow could sit out, and who had nothing of the conventional parson about him. There was little of "form" about those evening services. The shortest, "straightest" of prayers would drop upon a palpable stillness; the rest had

something of the incalculable about it, and no one could complain of monotony. A small sheaf of pencil notes represented the sermon in a "potted" form, but one suspects they were there chiefly to be ignored. Sometimes he would read a passage only to swerve off into something unpremeditated and surprising immediately after. Sometimes an unguarded thing flashed out; in those days he had not yet learnt the art of keeping his soul in its sheath. Now and again something less than wise was said; and that was the least unexpected, for no young preacher can let himself go in such brave abandonment and remain wise all the time. Of scholarship, commanding thought, acute penetration, there was little above a very respectable average; but there was sub-originality of temperament in abundance, and all the charm and dash of a chivalrous attitude towards life. Something swift and personal about his least notable utterances attracted and held one's attention. His abundant vitality, intense sympathy with certain aspects of life, and, above all, his inexhaustible interest in men made an irresistible appeal. One winter he held special services for students in the Opera House, dealing directly and specifically with the intellectual problems that face a man at college. In this work his genial humanity and his wise and simple honesty shone forth conspicuously. He never fumbled at the skirts of a problem, never pretended to give final solutions, or tried to juggle with his one talent so as to make it look like ten. If he did no more towards laying the spectres of the mind than most preachers, he did the bigger thing of making men

or that there was a looking for faith in the most perplexing of surroundings. I once knew an old country clergyman whose favourite maxim was, "When you are in doubt believe all the more." Dr. Kelman went far towards proving that such a course is not only comforting but eminently practicable.

From the New North to Free St. George's is a far cry—especially from the unconventional Sunday evening audience at the former to the staid and decorous Sunday morning congregation at the latter. It were vain to pretend that the translation has wrought no change in Dr. Kelman. The change inevitably induced by the exigencies of a changed situation is plainly marked. There is also the change wrought by the years and by what cuts deeper than time. Sympathy and genial candour still remain as of old, so does the great absorbing interest in life. But the rapture and inspiring moment of vital contact between preacher and hearer is not so immediate as in the old days. Much of the old keen relish of adventure seems to have gone; or is he a Stevensonian lantern-bearer, with the light burning and scorching unseen behind that immaculate pulpit gown of his? In one respect he is unchanged. He is still at home on the middle register of the soul, still shows the same complete and instant understanding of the average cultured man's perplexities and difficulties, and still inspires this type with a sure confidence in his sincerity, whole-hearted sympathy and helpfulness. And he still brings a breath of the open air into the pulpit. There is nothing cloistered or hieratic about his outlook upon life, and he preaches no theological Gospel.

Dr. Kelman has one great objective—to see Christ steadily and to see Him whole. It is the full-orbed, complete Christ he wants to present; the Son of Man who touches life at every point, who is not merely the *Christus Consolator*, or the Lamb of God that taketh away sin, or the great Master who calls his followers to self-denial and the bearing of the cross; but also the great Joy-bringer, the Intensifier of life, the supreme Incarnation of the will to live, or rather of God's will that man should live, and live with abounding zest and joyous vigour. His presentation may be compared to a landscape in which all aspects and moods of nature are found on one canvas. The fury of storm and the peace of clear skies, the ominous shadow and the friendly sunlight, the grandeur of rugged hills and the prettiness of a flower garden—all are in the picture. The green pastures and still waters verge on the valley of the shadow of death, and Calvary is set among the kindly purple hills of home. He does not want to paint only quiet glades and laughing brooks. "We have tethered Christ among the lilies" is a characteristic phrase of his. He wants to make room in his presentation for the Agony and the Sacrifice, for man's sin and God's passion. With a wealth of quiet insight and an individual power of persuasion, he sets the complete Christ, the Lord of all Life, before us. To those whose souls move habitually in straiter paths, whose life is a succession of grim choices and hair-breadth escapes from choosing fatally, and whose thoughts are narrowed down to the great alternative covered by the words sin and salvation, such preaching comes with a breath of liberation and enlargement. Listening to it, they

are brought out of the bleak wastes and menacing skies of their spiritual *habitat* into a large place where the rivers are full of water and the blue hills stretch away into the enchanted distance. So while they listen, at any rate, their devil leaves them and angels minister unto them.

One question remains. Can so complete and rounded a picture avail for our poor lop-sided human nature? Did not Luther shrewdly compare mankind to a man riding on a donkey and falling off now on this side and now on that, and Coleridge sagely remark that nothing symmetrical could correct man's radical one-sidedness? Obviously what the lop-sided mind needs is a certain pedagogic over-emphasis and exaggeration of the side it lacks. Only by such means can its partial atrophy be remedied, and it is for lack of this passionate emphasis that Dr. Kelman sometimes fails to cure. It is the men who are devoured by an idea as the Spartan boy was devoured by the fox, who keep mankind astride on its ass. Dr. Kelman is not so devoured.

And yet his presentation is not as harmonious and full-orbed as it looks. None can hope to escape our common lop-sidedness, and while Dr. Kelman speaks of certain aspects of life and of truth with the unmistakeable accent of the man who "has been there," he discourses of others in the derivative manner of a keenly intelligent and sympathetic onlooker. He has never been to hell, for instance; one doubts, indeed, if he has ever had more than a side-look at the devil. There used to be a window open towards hell from the pulpit of Free St. George's. It is walled up now—at least when Dr. Kelman preaches. By

some strange impulsion he has elected to write upon a book which presupposes an uncomfortably intimate knowledge of hell—"The Pilgrim's Progress." His study of "The Road" is informed and sensitive, and contains much that is wisely thought and finely said. But where the "Pilgrim's Progress" descends into hell, its genial interpreter is left standing on the edge of the green earth and casting timid and unpractised eyes into the abyss. One has only to think of his chapter on the temptations of Faithful. Faithful is the simplest and bluntest pilgrim that ever went to hell. Of subtlety there is not a trace about him, and yet he eludes Dr. Kelman, who discourses admirably about him, but entirely from the outside.

The man, then, who has been to hell, and therefore also the man who wants to look straight into Paradise before he has passed through Purgatory, may get neither the thing he wants nor the thing he needs from Dr. Kelman. Neither will he who has been baptized with the baptism whose drenching bitterness floods the soul with agony, and who has drunk of the cup that blanches the lip that dares to drink of it. But the many whose life is a chequer-board of shadows not too black and of sunshine not too blinding will find all they seek and more. And no one—whatever be his soul's state—can listen to his clear, fine, sincerely-felt exposition of the things by which men live without being lifted into a noble and exhilarating atmosphere and seeing far into the Delectable Country.

III

Rev. G. H. MORRISON, M.A.

MINISTER OF WELLINGTON UNITED FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW

Mr. Morrison has long been the despair of many who have tried to wrest the secret of his success from his preaching, notably from his famous Sunday evening addresses. The most delicate effort to decompose the grey and silver enchantment of these addresses is apt to explain that enchantment clean out of existence. One is left with a few anatomical specimens in one's hand; the soul has vanished into thin air, and vanished so completely that one begins to doubt if it ever existed. The truth is that Mr. Morrison has a touch of that rare thing whose name we have taken in vain so lightly and so often that we have ceased to recognize the reality when we see it—genius. And his is that most elusive form of it which offers no eccentricities or mannerisms, or even saliencies, as handles for ordinary folk to get hold of it by. Indeed, the two most prominent things about it are things which as often go with mediocrity, namely, simplicity and painstaking. So when we have said genius we are no wiser than before.

Yet there are intimations of something altogether rare and fine, even on the surface. There is, for instance, the most absolute and complete sincerity of taste and feeling. Not so much in his matter as in his manner—a manner that looks so slight and

shallow and is so profound—does this quality most triumphantly emerge. He confessedly addresses himself to the gallery on these occasions; yet who has ever caught him playing to the gallery even to the extent of prettified or too thickly underscored expression or of vulgarly accentuated values? He has always been entirely faithful to his own quiet, discriminative vision; he has never allowed his delicate sense of values to coarsen into a striking *à peu près* in the interests of popular appeal. That he achieves such appeal without the trick of a voluntary obliquity of vision or the suspicion of sensational exaggeration makes him at once an inspiration and a rebuke to men who are tempted to buy popularity at too high a figure.

Quietism of taste, sincerity of feeling, a complete mastery over his material, and an infinite capacity for taking pains are the very ground-stuff of Mr. Morrison's pulpit personality. One result is that the uninitiated are duped into an impression of facile simplicity, of mere surface-play. It may be granted at once that Mr. Morrison does not trawl the nethermost bed of the soul, that he leaves the utmost deeps of insight and passion unplumbed. He is, indeed, somewhat Greek; negatively in his avoidance of unmitigated horror, positively in his wide sight and valuation of things as a whole, and in his exquisite purity and simplicity of verbal sculpture. But, within his limits, he has both depth and subtlety. There is nothing elaborate or laboured in his work. Native endowment and long practice have given him the sure, indicative touch that finishes almost while it begins. There is no sense of effort, no smell

of midnight oil, no trace of the *perfervidum* air. Yet even his slightest utterance is serious—not conventionally solemn, but grave, weighty, full of substance. There is the minimum of aplomb about his preaching; few approach their subject less consciously. Yet it makes a more imperative demand upon one's serious consideration than the most prophetic of "messages"—the unappealing but inescapable demand of its own informed sincerity and gravity.

The style is quiet and genial, with frequent colloquial touches—the style of a man who need not use any special means to get *en rapport* with his audience, simply because for him to speak at all is to make contact. The voice comes with level ease. Sometimes it rises in a deeply-felt sentence, vibrant, stringent, with the highest note on the last word. People who find Mr. Morrison terribly hard to nail down rejoice in telling us that he owns a burr, that he stresses his l's where others stress their sibilants, and that he says "Gawd." And having said that, they have said about all that can be said of his external pulpit characteristics; his essential style is so limpid and clear a medium as to efface itself. His gestures are spare and unremarkable, his illustrations really illustrate; that is, they draw attention to the subject, not to themselves. One cannot imagine what an impressionist journalist of the scintillating order could find to say about him.

There is a certain spontaneousness about his Sunday evening addresses, yet no one with any insight into preaching could doubt that they are most carefully and lovingly prepared. Indeed, the dominant impression left by all Mr. Morrison's work is that he

loves preaching and treats it as a serious business, the supreme business of his life. The present-day religious public, especially south of the Tweed, finds it difficult to understand how a minister occupying an influential pulpit in a great city can keep so completely aloof from public affairs as Mr. Morrison does. It not only fails to understand such a temper; it is also quick to blame. That a minister of Jesus Christ must take some active share in the great public movements of his day is becoming a superstitition among us, and we are far too ready to set down the man who specializes in preaching and pastoral work as illiberal and parochially minded, dull to wider obligations, and at the root selfish. But it remains to be proved that the pulpit itself is not an important factor in our public life. Where its influence has declined it has largely been through want of specialisation on the part of ministers who are careful and troubled about almost everything except their sermons. Mr. Morrison, at any rate, is one of those who believe in preaching, who believe that it is worth a man's best, and that a world lost by devotion to the pulpit is a world well lost. He broods over his texts with something of the artist's unconsciousness and superb leisure. One can imagine him, as Emerson has it, rising early and working at large leisure in noble mornings opened by prayer and reading. Theorists assert that such esoteric culture, as they term it, results in small audiences of cloistered and anæmic souls who have never felt the pressure of life. Experience demonstrates that it is the preacher who in wise leisure reaps the harvest of a quiet eye, who often has the strongest appeal to the weary and heavy-

laden on life's highway. Certain it is that no audience could be less esoteric than the evening congregation at Wellington Church. They speak no dialect of the language of Canaan. They sit very lightly, for the most part, to the Church. They could give a more sophisticated minister than Mr. Morrison points in the ways of the world and the queerness of this life of ours. Yet they come week after week to this quiet, meditative shrine, and a steady stream of personal acknowledgment encourages and confirms the preacher in his course.

In his choice and handling of texts Mr. Morrison is not a little reminiscent of Dr. Parker. He has something of his swift and flashing insight into the possibilities of obscure texts, something of his sure instinct for the picturesque, and of his sensitiveness to verbal suggestion. A characteristic address, "Sacrifice and Song," on the text, "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also," and another entitled "The Equipoise of God," on "God also has set the one over against the other," are examples of this native flair for texts. But he has far more than an eye to the picturesque. He has the power of making the old, well-worn word quick and instinct with life. Some of his finest preaching is done on "old" texts, on truth which we call commonplace by reason of our commonplace understanding of them. He has the faculty of pouring a steady, searching light of interpretation upon them whose lustre remains, where the sudden lurid flash of mere *aperçu* quits the memory at the first touch of life's hurly-burly. I remember a short and simple address on the perennial theme of eternal life. Nothing

could have been quieter. Immortality, our inheritance from God; eternal life, the gift of Christ Jesus. Eternal life, our immortality quickened and kindled to its height and depth by the Lord Christ. Up and down the chords of our immortality passes the Hand that was pierced for us, and there sounds the music of eternal life. It is not a question of duration; the river is no longer at high tide than at low ebb, but how much deeper and fuller! Yet if we have eternal life in Him, the corollary must be that it endures beyond death, that in it somehow death is swallowed up, lost, forgotten. Condensed thus, nothing could be more familiar and unsensational. But he made it unaccountably memorable. One did not merely admire the genuine mental power which could re-think these great thoughts into newness and the temperamental grace that clothed them in so fresh a robe. One was seized by them as though for the first time, and their bite upon the mind was sure and deep. Seen with deep, experimental eyes, they were actually recreated.

One secret of his appeal lies in the breadth of his touch. No "private" interpretation is his. If he has tasted deep of the magic of hills and running water and of the enchantment of the wide green earth, he has also gauged the hard, devastating forces of street and market-place, aye, and the forces common to city and country against which the magic of neither hills nor sea avails. And thus he never offers the drowsy sweetness of heather, or the blue wine of the laughing wave, as a remedy for pain and sin. If he bids us lift our eyes to the hills, it is only "just because in the Gospel of God's love we have that

height and depth and everlasting strength " of which the hills are the symbol. If he pictures an imaginary Celtic psalmist hearing the spirit of the waters crying at night in the great calling of deep unto deep, he reminds us also that to the Hebrew soul " these echoings and answerings were the broken syllables of the One God."

Of late Mr. Morrison has tended to centralise his preaching. While formerly it might have been said that he taught us how to approach the things that matter rather than the things themselves, he now goes more unfalteringly, directly and intimately to ultimate issues.

His eyes have looked long and painfully upon the deep things, and have retained much that they have seen. And so, while not dropping a single note out of his gamut, he no longer allows the harmony to obscure the *leit-motif*. To the leisure of art he has added the urgency of life.

IV

Rev. W. E. ORCHARD, D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. PAUL'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ENFIELD, LONDON

DR. ORCHARD is a young preacher who has already done at least three things that make for a certain distinction. He has written a brilliantly provocative and provoking thesis upon "Modern Theories of Sin," which shows considerable force and independence on the critical, and a quite extraordinary unhesitancy on the constructive, side. He has also gathered round his Enfield ministry an eclectic audience from all parts of London—a state of things sufficiently remote from the genius of Presbyterianism to stimulate curiosity and inquiry. Lastly he has unequivocally identified himself with a section of Liberal theologians, which, to not a few, seems as remote from his own genius as from that of Presbyterianism, and within that circle has attained a well-deserved reputation as preacher, teacher, and counsellor of souls.

It is by these things, especially by the last, that Dr. Orchard has come to be a somewhat salient and picturesque figure in the religious life of London. In some quarters there is still a considerable amount of speculation as to a possible charge of heresy against him; but those who know the inwardness of Presbyterianism are very sure indeed that nothing so interesting and sensational is likely to occur. Prophecies concerning him are indeed many, and once upon a

time, when Dr. Orchard was less sure of himself and one could therefore afford to be more sure of him, one ventured upon some fairly confident predictions. But with the preacher's increasing assurance our uncertainty concerning his future goings has silenced all prophesyings and conjectures. Some of us who used to think we knew him a little are now quite sure that we know him not at all; others are slowly beginning to discover him, and are doing so by looking away from the very things that seem to reveal him most boldly.

Certain it is that not one of the three things by which Dr. Orchard has gained publicity is truly characteristic, or even indicative, of his essential strength. While by no means "accidental," they might almost be termed so in contrast to what is abiding and innate in his spiritual and theological temperament. And so far from opening a door into that temperament, they serve to hide it from many. To come within sight of his true self, it is necessary to forget, for the time being, the existence of the New Theology, and to listen only to the positive message which no utterance of his ever lacks. Then it will be borne in upon one that he is a great preacher not merely by force of natural endowment, but by grace —by the possession of an Evangel in which he glories with a passionate and surrendering conviction.

It must be admitted that Dr. Orchard does not at present appeal to more than a section of the religious public—to that section which finds itself in more or less serious revolt from the older view of things. To that revolt, whether it be of the heart or of the head, he speaks mightily. He generally begins his sermon

by a frank and explicit acceptance of the findings of more or less "advanced" criticism concerning the text, and not unfrequently supplies some extraordinarily candid information regarding his views on matters not so directly involved in the text. He then proceeds to demolish the theological implications which the current interpretation has drawn from the text, and does so with a conciseness and finality that is almost disconcerting to the more slow-going mind. So far, he ministers to the professional heretic; so far also he not only "shocks," but really and deeply hurts many "little ones," and as many strong and sincere souls whose roots go deep into the foundations which he sees shaken and rent. And to this extent also his frank, bold, honest pulpit talk (and the very best of his excellent preaching is inimitable talk) does not go to attract the open-air man, who knows little about theology and cares less, but who has lived cheek by jowl with the great elemental forces.

I once took such a man to hear Dr. Orchard—a man who had knocked about in the great, lonely silences of the Bush till he had been stripped of every conventionality and sham, but confirmed in the worship and the fear of God. He never went to church—didn't care a hang about it, he said—and I had some difficulty in manœuvring him out to Enfield. He listened to the sermon and was—well, shocked, as the anæmic orthodox church-goer does not know how to be shocked. At first he was inclined to charge the preacher with downright impiety and all but blasphemy; but soon he realized his burning sincerity and deep-seated reverence and changed his mind. "I tell you what it is," he said to me afterwards,

"that parson is city-bred, a town man down to the roots of him. If he'd got the sea and the hills in his soul, or the great wide spaces, and if he heard the cry of the wind above the rattle of your beastly streets, he'd not say much about some of the things that seem big to him now, and he'd not know how to say enough about some that he gets rid of in five minutes." Let the criticism go for what it is worth. If Dr. Orchard had the wave in his heart and the cry of the wind on the hill haunting his soul, he would have less to give to the nervous, storm-tossed, baffled city folk, and that would be a sore loss. For he does appeal to those restless, desultory, eager children of the twentieth century, with their jumble of undigested reading and their moral and spiritual complexity, as few others in London. Yet a dip into the region where the soul comes to see that the things it called superstition are of the deep treasures of that ancient instinctive wisdom which is reality would go far to strip him of that superficial and only apparent but none the less damaging flippancy that mars his work.

But there is another side and a greater. Once we get past the negative aspect of his preaching, we come upon something that sets us face to face with the reality of sin and salvation—something that grips and pierces. We realize that if Dr. Orchard is frankly a Liberalist, he is a Liberalist with a difference; and that difference so great and deep-going that it makes it extremely difficult to classify this remarkable man, who has been in too great a hurry to label himself. The difference is that passionate interest in redemption which is seminal and constitutive in all his work and vibrates through his most casual utterance. It

is not of the intellect merely; it issues in a genuine and self-sacrificing love of souls which softens the hardest edges of his thought and irradiates his least lovely pronouncement. At the heart of his theology is a Christ who, feeling the urgency of the Divine will ever upon Him, and yielding Himself up with the utmost singleness of purpose and the most complete self-abandonment to the impulse of Saviourhood latent in every man, obtained that "Name that is above every name," whereby all men must be saved.

Thus it comes about that, after being ruffled by some cocksure pronouncement upon St. Augustine's mis-reading of his own experience and upon what constitutes the true diagnosis of his case, or by an off-hand statement to the effect that the great conversions which are the glory of the old evangelical tradition were effected not because of the theology which lay behind them, but in spite of it, one is suddenly brought up against something really great and searching, and all the minor irritations are forgotten. Suddenly a note of passion creeps into the clear, sympathetic voice. Suddenly the preacher grips reality with naked hands and all side issues sink below the surface. He is speaking of the reality of the soul, of sin, of the human will, of God, of Christ. Terrible in some moods is his unsparing surrender to truth, his incorruptible attitude towards reality. He refuses to eat the bread of compromise, spurns all cheap pragmatisms, scorns to debase religion into a mere means of human happiness. He does not palter with the irony, the exactions, the crushing sternness of the love of God; he does not trick himself or others into believing that Jesus can be loved with impunity.

His Christ is the Christ whose words fling fire on the earth, whose touch leaves wounds, whose Cross shatters our little providential theories and tempts us to cry out in our passionate hours that it is a cruel and bitter thing to be loved of God. Men who have so learnt Christ have a Herod-sword within their hearts, and by an inalienable birthright belong to the spiritual aristocracy. If such a man is a preacher, and especially if he is a born preacher like Dr. Orchard, he will fling fire among men and live to see it kindled.

V

Rev. JOHN A. HUTTON, M.A.

MINISTER OF BELHAVEN UNITED FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW

"A WELL-PLACED man"—the phrase jumps to one's mind after the first five minutes at Belhaven. The congregation is largely made up of what a base jargon calls "good" people—people with an assured position and a reasonably large banking account; people whom other people like to know. It is well groomed, wears good clothes with the ease of life-long habit, has the unmistakable look of *bien être*. It is not difficult to imagine the type of minister who goes with such a people. He must be a man of ability, of course, and possess the modern equivalent of "soundness in the faith," with a distinct talent for finding a foothold in Scripture for the uneasy mind of the age. Public-spirited, within well-defined limits, he must be, and some aptitude for ecclesiastical procedure is equally desirable. Above all, he must have the maximum of social tact and the knack of genial acquaintanceship; and one can imagine a gift for opportune silence superlatively useful. Time was when to be a well-placed man meant to be everybody's man except one's own. That time is past, and to-day even the "fashionable" clergyman is at liberty to possess his soul if he cares to take the trouble. Mr. Hutton, at any rate, is very much his own man. He probably sees nothing specially fine or sensible in running one's head against a stone wall.

He certainly will not settle a difficulty with a sledge-hammer when it can be settled by diplomacy. But whichever way he may settle it, it will be very much to his own satisfaction and, one may safely add, with the minimum of dissatisfaction to everyone else concerned.

Balance, sanity, a realistic mental habit, a turn for middle ways: these are characteristic of Mr. Hutton's personality, and go to make him emphatically the right man in the right place, giving him the confidence and "purchase" which are indispensable elements of success. He is no hankerer after strange stars and new moons, no break-neck rider to the hounds of speculation, but a level-eyed, competent leader of men, holding an easy and dignified citizenship of the world, feeling the drift of men's minds and meeting the intricacies of the modern situation with a high degree of *savoir faire*. He values independence, but sees no virtue in singularity. One has read of the French priest who, on being taunted with his eccentricities, replied that he had not risen at four o'clock every morning for fifty years in order to think like other people. One may be fairly sure that Mr. Hutton does not see the wisdom of either rising with the lark, or of denying oneself the liberty to think like other people if one so chooses. The result is an entirely winsome and human type of preaching,

> "Not too high and good
> For human nature's daily food."

"Clever" preaching it is often called, and Mr. Hutton certainly possesses a liberal share of that double-edged endowment which makes a man successful in everything short of the best, makes him popular with

those who like him and peculiarly enraging to those who do not. He is shrewd, terse and stimulating, flings out the kind of challenge that is provocative without being provoking, makes his hearers feel that he respects their views even when he is demolishing them, states his points seriously but without over-stringency. He has a sure eye for the practically effective, is master of the art of putting things, gives us the kind of truth we can understand; has a gift of reconnoitre and grip which commands the respect of the hard-headed business man. "Clever" is undoubtedly a word that fairly applies to him—the question remains, in what sense? Does it sum him up, or is it merely the pinch of salt in his dish of wisdom? Is it of the disconcerting order that breeds instinctive suspicion, or does it add practical confidence to moral trust? Is it merely a flair of the things that "go down" with people, or an instinct for the shortest way to lift people up?

It does not take long to make up one's mind on that score. If practical sagacity and cleverness are the things that jump into one's consciousness at the first impact, it is only to recede at the surging up of something far deeper and finer. Perhaps we have been taken with the palpable cleverness of a literary touch coming in with the maximum of effectiveness; almost in the same breath a half-unconscious word may reveal life where we only suspected literature. Perhaps just when we have exhausted our admiration of his cool, firm handling of things, something will be said that discovers a spirit faltering before the great realities, brooding deep against eternal mysteries. Or, again, our approval of some bit of

just and telling criticism may suddenly be lost in the consciousness of an intelligent and sensitive sympathy. It is, indeed, the touch of sympathy that dominates all his preaching — the sympathy of the man who may not himself be deeply acquainted with grief and anguish, but whose fine intuition outruns his experience as John outran Peter long ago. To the problems which arise from the griefs of man and the silence of God he brings a quiet but profound understanding and a healing touch. His treatment covers all the mysterious, wistful places where the wind of the Spirit stirs the reed that is man, and nearly every ford where the soul's weakness wrestles with the eternal Strength, except perhaps the ford that is called Jabbok. The light of a penetrative but reverent comprehension plays over all he says. Undramatic in form, he has much of the dramatist's art, much of his sensitiveness to human fate, of his swift understanding of human sin and sorrow. And with this there goes a very instant and vital sense of the presence of God in human life. One does not wonder at Mr. Hutton's contagious enthusiasm for Browning, which permeates so much of his preaching and writing. He, too, sees with unflinching eye the pathos and peril of our mortal moral strife. He sees the contradictions and desperate enigmas which life flings in the teeth of the soul. He sees it as one might see a man from whom one expected kindness and friendship saying and doing brutal things, and offering closed lips and averted eyes to all demands for explanation. The man is an enemy, then, and we are at his mercy ?

> " Hush, I pray you !
> What if this friend happen to be—God ? "

If to say this "Hush!" convincingly—to say it so that the man who is being buffeted and mauled to earth by life believes it and takes hope—is "clever," why, then Mr. Hutton is exceedingly clever indeed. But we know a better word for such "cleverness."

A sense of the pathos and mystery of life and of the overshadowing and indwelling Presence make a cord wherewith a preacher of temperament and good intellectual endowment may hope to bind all sorts and conditions of men. But there is a threefold cord which is not easily broken, and Mr. Hutton's third strand is made of the indestructible fibre of sincerity. He is one of those who have managed to achieve peace between an aspiring soul and the demands of a conventional world and a no less conventional Church, and he is one of the few who have achieved that peace with honour. He is remarkably and frankly contented with much of the present *status quo*, and sees no reason to think that we have fallen upon particularly evil days. He prefers to praise rather than to blame, and sees no just cause for passing a self-denying ordinance upon his laudative propensity. If he has his dislikes and antagonisms, he contents himself with very occasional opportunities of airing them. This type of temperament is by no means uncommon in itself; what makes it uncommon in this instance is its conjunction with perfect honesty and sincerity. His broad human sympathy and generous understanding of our imperfect endeavours and broken lights are bottomed in truth. Thus it comes about that, where in other men this dominantly appreciative temper might confirm us in our slatternly acceptance of the second best, his generous estimate

of things rather gives us an indelible object-lesson in the art of considering whatsoever things are pure and true and lovely and of good report.

But it must not be concluded that Mr. Hutton's judgment lacks stringency. In all his message nothing is more valuable than his strictures upon a Church that has lost much of its soul in touting for souls, and not even gained the world by its bad bargain. That the Church must be a much smaller thing before it ever can be a bigger is an unpopular conviction which some of us have held for some time, and which finds a wise and weighty champion in Mr. Hutton. For the rest, his preaching abounds in strong, memorable, apposite things, in stimulus and sudden, revealing sidelights, in suggestion and inspiration. Humour and pathos, poetry and hard reason, literature and life are fused into an attractive, compelling whole by the indefinable something we call temperament. One does not wonder that Mr. Hutton is popular across the Atlantic as well as at home. He is a preacher whose appeal cannot fail to find a response in all the seven seas wherever the soul of man has not forgotten how to laugh and weep.

VI

Rev. ALEXANDER CONNELL, M.A., B.D.

MINISTER OF SEFTON PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LIVERPOOL

THERE was once a man of South Uist—one of those children of water who are born with a wave in their heart and must ever hear the sea calling them—who made his way to London, and by reason of a clear, keen brain and the ambition behind it became a successful merchant. But the sea followed him. Through the click of tape machine and typewriter and the ringing of the telephone bell he heard its intimate rumour on the pavement below, but bent the closer over his figures and took no heed. Then he heard the running wave plashing against the very windows, and still turned away from it. Lastly the sea came into his office, gurgled about his feet, rose higher and higher till it reached his heart, his very eyes, and he was all but gone. Then he took warning and turned his back upon London, and made his way coastward to appease the jealousy of his first love. They tell, too, of another child of the sea who went inland and was ploughing his field and could not see to plough, for all the brown furrows had become tumbling waves; and of yet another who heard the sobbing of the tide among seaweed whenever he dug in his garden, and left his snug home and the woman he loved for the restless wave. These are they who

are torn by two natures, cast in two moulds, and when shall they be satisfied ?

Mr. Connell, too, is of the unnumbered clan of those who must ever be hearing one of those ancient cries that have vexed and charmed the soul of man since the mysterious beginning. Not the sea, perhaps, but the voice of the blue hills of dream, the wail of the curlews of the rapt imagination are in his mind and soul-fibre. He was born to read the secret of the reed-fringed pool, the rune of the wandering wind, and the spell of high, silent places. He was meant to knock boldly at the door of dreams, to claim his citizenship in I–Brasîl before he had tasted the disillusionments of earth. But popularity, which plays such strange tricks with men, has whisked him into alien lands. As the man of South Uist heard the sea through the din of city business, so he, brooding deep against the ancient hidden things, heard the clash of modern life, the clamant cry of social need, the insistent call of things to be done, of the hour awaiting a man and the Church a leader. And so, reinforced with his gift of graceful, eloquent speech and interpretation, he followed the call ; and if to-day you told some people that Alexander Connell is a mystic by divine right and inheritance, they would quote any number of practical, statesmanlike utterances of his, and laugh their denial. Yet it is true that the call of city and affairs is not the ultimate call of his spirit, though he has listened to it to such purpose. It is an alien cry, a foreign language ; to follow it is to go along a broad road which is yet but a side-track of the true. Mr. Connell has followed it as wholeheartedly as he knows how, and thus it comes that he,

too, is a man of the double mood, of the divided nature. For souls such as his cannot ever wholly follow any voice but the voice of their own country, nor stifle the first original call. So his speech often forgets its serious practicality, and slips back into that visionary vein which is its mother-tongue. He stands before us with his birthright of dream in one hand and the mess of pragmatic leadership in the other. And he will not let go of either. He cannot let go of the first, for it is part of him, it is, indeed, himself; and he will not yet let go of the second because, distrusting contemplation, he sees in action a means of grace and a condition of ministerial salvation. We are told that the Celt fails through mistaking dream for reality. Mr. Connell evidently believes it, and, in his anxiety to escape from such a tragic fate, he is in danger of mistaking the reality for a dream. But we are persuaded that he is on the verge of claiming what was always his, and of standing forth not only as a sympathetic, cultured, eloquent preacher, but as the bearer of a message peculiarly his own, knocking on the hidden heart of all who go despairing because of the lost vision.

As it is, he never fails to attract and appeal. He has a fine external endowment. His voice, launched carelessly into the widest spaces, not only reaches the farthest corner with absolute ease and effectiveness, but never loses its soft, full tone or its beautiful modulations. It is not merely a voice; it is the expression of a singularly sweet, sympathetic nature, and conveys a conviction of generosity and truth. Then he has what must emphatically be called good style. Word, phrasing, manner, treatment—all are

instinct with dignity and grace, and show not only that exquisite sense of fitness which is the secret of good speaking, but even more the quality of moderation, that *temperentia* which is the rarest thing in these days. There is poise, self-balance. Strength is never brutal, tenderness never sentimental; there is no sensational hyperbole in his indignation, no rude intimacy in his appeal. And it must be admitted that he has his share of that practical understanding which is so sure of being appreciated by the average hearer. I have heard him give missionary addresses crammed with shrewd, statesmanlike argument and irrefutable thrusts of sheer commonsense. I have also heard him preach sermons, keen-edged and fiery, with a practical passion for social righteousness, an energised pity for the victims of selfishness and greed. At such times I have not wondered at many who denied his mystic inheritance, and who urged that, even if he had the freehold of a city of dreams, he had made a noble kenosis and chosen the better part. And yet again it will come to one that there are hundreds of preachers who could preach this type of sermon with even greater effectiveness. With all his power, Mr. Connell is not conspicuous for grip; somehow he lacks contact with his audience, it may be from the very balance and harmoniousness of his endowment. With all his sympathy, he does not know the short-cuts to the common heart.

But sandwiched in between these efforts at practicality, there comes ever and anon a sermon in which the mystic takes the throne. Then those of us who have seen what our lips may not tell are satisfied. For his is not the mysticism so-called which is merely

a *dilettante* interest in the mechanism of the Inward Way, but the spark of troubling fire which God buries deep in the hearts of His elect, so that, passing over the dusty highways of the world, their inward eyes may be open to all that some of us call the gardens of Tirna'n-og, and others the beauty that is beyond beauty, and others the City of God, and others still the Christ. Then it is that one hears the hidden cry beneath the calm sonority and rhythm of his fine voice —a cry which cannot be expressed in words, but is clear enough to those who have grown up to the tune of the three oldest cries in the world: the cry of the curlew, the cry of the wind, and the cry of the sea. Then, too, a large stillness creeps into his eyes and speech — a brooding quiet in which one hears the murmur of eternity upon the horizon of life. At such times he reveals his gift of spiritual enchantment; for divine magic can be exercised only in that stillness which is not of the quiet voice but of the passionate soul.

In such sermons he will speak of the great mystics, not of John of the Cross or of Santa Teresa, not of Jacob Behmen or of William Law, but rather of those in all the ages who, while not troubling greatly about the philosophy of the hidden way, have lived by the unheard call, the unseen beauty. He will tell of Enoch, who impressed his generation with a sense of the incalculable; of Abraham, in whose response to the inward call religion became conscious of itself; of Moses, who saw a land his feet never touched till he stood with his Lord on the mount of transfiguration; of Isaiah, statesman and mystic, who stood between a people's spiritual and material bankruptcy;

of Ezekiel, who in Babylon painted his sky with the tints of the New Jerusalem; of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who looked at Jesus of Nazareth and saw the Eternal Christ; of Paul, the mystic. Then one realises where Mr. Connell's true vocation lies. But even in such utterances a warning against overmuch dreaming is introduced. The preacher fears the temptations and pitfalls of his natural endowment. He knows the deadly bane of the dream that comes only through the gate of horn. He knows the doom of human poppies, children of sleep and poison and eternal night. Yet the danger is not in the dreaming. The danger is in not dreaming enough, and in not dreaming strongly and believingly enough. The man who runs away from his own vision may see Jacob's ladder at Bethel and be afraid lest, naturalised in Bethel, he be of no use in Liverpool. The man who surrenders to the dream of dreams, surrenders daringly, unflinchingly, regardless of a world's pity or the loss of a reputation in affairs, will come to see Jacob's ladder pitched between heaven and Charing Cross, and will build the City of God on the pavements of London or Liverpool or whatever his place might be.

It is this fear that keeps Mr. Connell from appreciating the great mediæval and modern mystics. Theirs is certainly a perilous road, and there is too much elaborateness of direction on their scrips. Yet there is an indissoluble bond between Paul's "Of such an one will I glory" and Ruysbroeck's "Needs must I rejoice beyond the age, though the world has horror of my joy." "Ian Maclaren" was a mystic by remote inheritance. He chose to domesticate the

soaring thing of mist and fire into a little bird that piped its wistful lay around the Bonny Brier Bush. His successor is a mystic by inalienable right. He has the freedom of the House of Dreams, and the world awaits the legitimate heir of dreams. Why will he not dream ?

VII

Rev. L. MACLEAN WATT, M.A., B.D.

MINISTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH

"OH, you mean Watt of the 'Long Last Mile.'" That is the answer given nine times out of ten to inquiries concerning the minister of St. Stephen's. Watt of the "Long Last Mile"—the writer of a religious lyric which, while it is genuine poetry, is by no means great poetry, nor heart-shaking with spiritual poignancy, and yet has captured the religious public, as few similar things have of late, chiefly because of its inspired appeal to an age of strong yearnings and uncertain vision. Its author has caught as few others the dim, brooding note of the modern soul astray in its own life, with but fugitive glimpses of a God who sits weaving mystery on the far-away hills of silence and wonder. And he puts between it and the Inscrutable the Man who is as a hiding-place from the wind and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land—the "Man of Nazareth, Christ for me." In many exquisite rhymes and lyrics which catch at the heart with a bitter-sweet pain, or fall upon it with a deep quiet comforting, he has sounded that wistful note and ministered to the weary crying of a groping age. In his preaching it is the same gamut he ranges over, but with a difference. And it is this difference which makes him known as of the "Long Last Mile" rather than as of St. Stephen's.

For while his lyrics give us the truth of certain things with touching directness and simplicity, his sermons speak the same truth with damaging literary preciosity and a disastrous superfluity of rhetoric. One listens and one admires, too, as one cannot help admiring, the exaggeration of what are in themselves genuine and valuable gifts. And then one realises how fine and valid and compelling a pulpit power is vitiated for want of a little restraint and for want of a more steady concentration upon final issues. It is when side-issues—interesting, pathetic, by no means negligible, but yet side-issues beside the central question—are torn to threads through long manipulation that the temptation to set literature in the place of life and to substitute rhetoric for witness-bearing becomes a nagging besetment to the preacher. To decline upon side-issues is perhaps the characteristic vice of the modern pulpit, and if in these days cheap slang and platform effectiveness largely take the place of the literary touch and the rhetorical turn, the essential situation is the same. Simplicity and directness are lost as the soul of the preacher leaves the depths, and a vehement complexity first surcharges the mind of the listener, then leaves it unreplenished and weary.

Mr. Watt habitually declaims. Only seldom does his high carrying voice sink to something more colloquial and intimate. "If he would only talk a little" is one's unspoken cry as one listens. But the voice sweeps on, cascades of running, sparkling words are poured out, and one is wearied and angered all the more because there is so much sterling ability, so much fine feeling and sympathetic insight behind this torren-

tial rhetoric. Then suddenly the preacher quotes one of his own little poems, and in the relief it brings one wishes for the thousandth time that Watt of St. Stephen's were *always* Watt of the "Long Last Mile."

But for his elaborate and unrelieved ornateness he would be a master-craftsman of language. He is not afraid of colour and music, of gold and silver and sea-purple threads in the web of speech. He has made a cult of phraseology. He glories in word-jewellery, has a feeling for splendour and distinction of phrase, a gift of rare and incisive verbal values and combinations. It is his prodigality of these things that frustrates their power. We all remember how a certain native of Drumtochty rebuked an English body for bursting into superlatives over a sunset. "Man," he said in effect, "you should keep a few words for the twenty-first chapter of Revelation." And listening to Mr. Watt one is tempted to say, Oh, this is very fine, as fine as anything we have ever heard in this line. But man, man, what will you say when you come to speak of the supreme crises of the soul, of the red passion that boils in the blood, of the vulture of temptation that buries its beak in the very fibre of heart and brain; of the paralysing mysteries and maddening failures of the spirit? What of the inscrutable silences of God? What of the terror of His stern and unsparing love? What of the Cross? What of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven? As the stringent voice of the preacher strides on, always on that high note of declamation, with the mingling of metallic harshness and melting pathos only found in voices of that calibre, one wishes he would fling his wealth upon that which can carry

off the most richly embroidered magnificence; upon the tragedy rather than upon the pathos of life, upon the joy of the Lord rather than upon the joys of home.

I remember a sermon preached on the occasion of the annual London Scottish Festival—a sermon full of the brooding splendour of "old, unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago." In one sense such a sermon is not a fair test, for a tyrannous tradition demands that the preacher should dwell upon those deep-going things that cluster round the words race and country and home—things which are so strong and sacred in themselves and become so weak and sentimental when talked about. On the other hand, it showed Mr. Watt in the field in which he is most securely at home, and within whose bounds so many of his utterances are cast. He chose the story of Hadad for his subject; Hadad hearing the cry of the old land, the call of the blood, the voice of the dead, and asking the king to let him go. He had not lacked anything in Egypt; "howbeit, let me go in anywise." There followed a word-picture of the man who hears the old land calling, who, in the streets of London, hears the soft swish of the Hebridean seas; whose ears, even on the Stock Exchange, must ever be listening, listening for the sough of the wind and the wailing of the curlew; whose eyes see the heather hills plainly from behind the counting-house desk; whose heart "remembers how" while the drudging brain is wrestling with figures. It was a word-picture full of exquisite touches; of phrases tipped with fire or lapped in mist, of threads of many colours flashed through the web of homespun with a magic shuttle, of a thousand and one hints of magic beauty, mystery

and romance. What it lacked was that contact which comes where will knocks on will and life rings against life. Beautiful in artistry and delicate in feeling, it yet never rose above graceful literature and wistful sentiment. It was a call to the blood, not to the conscience ; a cry to the heart, not to the spirit. It was thrall to the nets of beauty and wonder, but went free of the iron chains of a passionate compulsion rooted in will.

I remember another sermon in which the preacher delved below sentiment to the grim and fearsome region, where into man's idleness there crowd "lusts and passions, bats and owls of shameful things which buffet and bruise the soul." It was informed with a very pathetic understanding of the misery and isolation of soul that come to the man who, having seen the beatific vision, turns his back in a moment of madness and surrenders to dishonour. It was a poignant and compassionate commentary on the lines which the preacher quoted with so much valid effect :

> "I, Francis Villon, oft have made
> For ribald ears a ribald lay,
> Midst sorry partners undismayed
> Have revelled till the dawn of day.
>
> Then, while they slept (unvexed were they)
> I might not sleep, nor solace gain,
> Nor hush the still, small voice, nor stay
> The whisper, 'Thou hast sinned again.'"

Through all the over-elaboration of language and the weight of rhetoric the impression of a genuine insight, a brooding tenderness, prevailed.

But it is when Mr. Watt faces the Sunset that his most intimate and individual temperament gets full justice. For all who have buried treasure in some

green kirkyard, that is, for most sons of men, he has the word that will touch some hidden spring of response. The appeal runs through many a sermon, but it comes most quietly invasive and incisively sweet in his beautiful lines, "The Tryst":

"O the way sometimes is low,
And the waters dark and deep,
And I stumble as I go.

But I have a tryst to keep.
It was plighted long ago
With some who lie asleep.

And though days go dragging slow,
And the sad hours graveward creep,
And the world is hush'd in woe,

I will neither wail nor weep,
For he would not have it so,
And I have a tryst to keep."

VIII

Rev. NORMAN MACLEAN, M.A.

MINISTER OF PARK CHURCH, GLASGOW

One often hears it said of Mr. Maclean in certain quarters that he is a pure Highlander—not one of those poor creatures who lay a feverish claim to Highland blood because their great-grandmother was a Macpherson, but a Highlander in the fullest sense of the word, and to the backbone. And this is said by fellow Highlanders not only with unequivocal pride, but as implying an inalienable birthright of vision and dream, of mystery, romance and spiritual ecstasy; of unconquerable loyalty to Celtic ideals, of a sweet and beautiful pride and a chivalry unattained by any other race. It is this assumption that has gone more than anything else to frustrate a valid Celtic movement, and to hasten the overshadowing of the Gael by other races. For (there is no racial road to dream and vision); and even though there is a form of it peculiar to the Gael and passing beautiful, the Gaelic people in suffering defeat have largely bequeathed it to the conquering races (thus gaining the victory of victories in the very hour of defeat), and it may live to-day in purer and more intensely concentrated form in the man who has not one drop of Highland blood in his veins than in him who can trace no other in all his ancestry. Fiona Macleod, in whom a beautiful racial pride was unmarred by bitterness and arro-

gance, reminds us that there is not any Celtic visionary "so rapt and absolute as the Londoner William Blake, or the Scandinavian Swedenborg, or the Flemish Ruysbroeck; or any Celtic poet of nature to surpass the Englishman Keats"; nor does he think even religious ecstasy is more seen in Ireland than in Italy. "It is not well," he beautifully reminds us, "that because of the whistling of the wind in the heather one should imagine that nowhere else does the wind suddenly stir the grasses in its incalculable hour."

To say, then, that Mr. Maclean is a pure Highlander is to speak vaguely, suggesting possibilities—probabilities, if you will—rather than asserting something positive. True, he strikes us at first contact with all the external characteristics of the Highlander. He has the Gaelic voice, which, whether high-pitched or low, brisk or drowsy-sweet, always comes with its own indigenous blend of softness and hardness, in some cases soft in the bulk but tense at the edges, in others smooth and silken-surfaced with a core of flint. Always, too, it has something in it of the three oldest cries in the world: the cry of the sea, the cry of the wind, and the cry of the curlew. He has, also, a good deal of the typical Highland courtesy: the desire to please, the trick of soft and genial speech, touched with a deference which has no kinship with servility. This gentleness is deceptive to those who are strangers to the Highland type of men with the soft speech and the dour heart who have so often betrayed the very cause they would gladly have died for, and whom we condemn and are proud of in one breath. It belongs to the humble Gaelic pride which shows itself not in swagger or "side," but in a

tremulous sensitiveness which in other peoples goes with shame rather than with consciousness of racial glory.

And the minister of Park Church is not only a typical Highlander in the more palpable traits; his is also that intimate acquaintance with Gaelic life which most modern Highlanders lack. With the life of the Island Gael he is specially conversant. His first parish was Wateruish in the Island of Skye, and there doubtless his native understanding of the sorrow and the pity of present-day religious life in these islands of the West was sharpened and deepened by pastoral experience. The church had been left empty and derelict by the Disruption, mouldy seats, broken plaster, and a grey waste of filth made an ill beginning for a young minister, and among the small remnant that remained to the Church of Scotland there were only three communicants. And in the process of increasing that number to twenty (it is not given to every man to increase his Communion-roll sixfold and more) the piteous and shameful divisions of Presbyterianism, and the consequent embittering and warping of life, bit very deep into his consciousness. His grim book, "The Burnt Offering," has been severely criticised by Free Churchmen; but those who have lived and worked in the Hebridean isles know how real a disaster and how festering a sore the book discloses, even though they may not agree with everything the gifted author says on that score. To know life in the Protestant Hebrides is to know the meaning of sunless existence. In liberating the island Gael from priestcraft, the Reformation has trodden the beautiful face of joy under foot and stamped

it out of existence. There is almost no song, almost no joyousness, in these islands to-day. The old stories and songs, the most precious heirloom any race could have, are all but forgotten ; only the benighted "Papanaich" sing them and tell them over the *ceilidh* fire ; few others remember or dare to utter what they do remember. That such a price was too high to pay for Gospel liberty one dare not say ; but high it was, and but for the obsession of a narrow legalistic spirit it need not have been paid in full, and there's the pity of it.

From Wateruish Mr. Maclean went to Glengarry, and there, under more genial skies, he found his gift of quiet humour, and his pen reflected the laughing inspiration of the place. Colinton came next, and very tightly did his heart-strings twine round that enchanting parish, so that when the call to Park Church came he heard it with pain, and agreed with his children who had hoped the Park people would vote against him so that they could stay on in Colinton. But he turned his face cityward in the end, and with no little misgiving. None but a fool could forget, in accepting such a charge, that it was at Park that John Caird had launched his incomparable voice upon the tense stillness of rapt attention—Caird the master-preacher of the nineteenth century, whose high and imperious dialectic thrilled as emotional oratory thrills, and whose involuted harmonies of thought and expression laid an intoxication upon the mind. It was at Park Church, too, that Professor Charteris charmed and held men with an utterance strong indeed, but, above all, wonderfully persuasive and wooing, and worked out those great organizing

principles of his which set him with Chalmers among the great statesmen-ecclesiastics of Protestantism. To enter upon such a succession required a brass-girt soul indeed, but one was found to do it in manly simplicity and dutifulness ; and Donald Macleod lived to become the vital spirit of the place, and it is hard to think of Park Church without the robust and genial presence, so full of an easy yet dignified humanity, of its third minister. Mr. Maclean followed him in deep humility of spirit, craving the prayers of the people and assuring them in the simplest of words that, God helping him, he would do his best.

And his best is very good indeed. That stringent Highland voice of his, Gaelic in every intonation and accent, with the cadence of sea and wind latent somewhere in its background, compels attention. Attuned to the great inspirational forces, one could hardly imagine it dealing in the anise and cummin of exegetical or doctrinal correctness, or preaching down the aspiring heart with a little store of maxims. Given a great text winged with the fire of inspired imagination, and he will do something fine and suggestive with it. Or given a small text of wistful beauty or human pathos, and he will snatch the very heart out of it. Or given a shrewd bit of proverbial wisdom or a picturesque slice of Old Testament story, and he will bring humour and fancy and romance and tenderness to bear upon it, as the case may be, and translate it into the palpitating life of the present. A liberal dose of sanctified commonsense effectually yokes his imaginative and suggestive tendency to practical needs, and an instinctive exegetical sense compensates for a certain impatience with the minutiæ of

textual inquiry. A talent for "form," a love of simple, stately ritual is innate in him. One could imagine him fuming and chafing under a certain slip-shod and meretricious type of popular Nonconformist service, miscalled "bright and hearty," with its often weak and sentimental hymns, and its jarring familiarity of approach to eternal mysteries. Even in the freedom of preaching, when his voice is shaken by upward lifts and passionate vibrations, and when gesture and word keep striding step and eloquence comes pelting from a glowing heart, the sense of absolute fitness prevails. Not a word is uttered which is out of keeping with the awe and the depth of worship, not a phrase which does not reflect the reverence and restraint that become God's house. It is preaching of the grand, reticent, worshipful order, tipped with the fire of imagination, coloured with the rainbow-hue of the human. Profound and soul-shaking it is not, but suggestive, wistful, evocative, touching the soul with awe and wonder.

Yet, to come back to one's first musings, Mr. Maclean's is not the Gael's undivided passion for the beauty that is beyond beauty. Touched with the Celt's ecstasy, he is not all wrought by dream and vision; if he were, he would scarcely be the minister of Park Church, Glasgow. His imaginations are but the poppies among the corn, the little blue flowers of fancy on the tough stalk of carle hemp. He is among many things that most un-Celtic thing of all—an Erastian of the stark, *doctrinaire* order. He glories in telling how he is an Anglican south of the Tweed, because, forsooth, the Establishment principle must be borne witness to. One cannot help wondering if for the

same reason he would be a Mohammedan in Turkey or an unmoral hedonist East of Suez, where the best is like the worst. But, even as he expounds this queer doctrine, a sudden glint comes into his eyes and the next sentence sounds the clear note of that interior spiritual life which is the inalienable birthright of the Gael.

IX

Rev. IVOR J. ROBERTON, M.A.

MINISTER OF REGENT SQUARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LONDON

To enter Regent Square Church is to become conscious, not of the dead hand, but of the deathless inspiration of a great past. Within its walls the years and decades gather themselves together and spring into timeless life. The train of its great preachers and almost equally great hearers files past in a soundless march. The pews fill with worshippers; from many cities and lands come the ghosts of great congregations. The pulpit is taken in turn by the dead and the living. First Edward Irving, aglow with irregular splendour, a Titan upon whose puissant brow some perverse demon has set the mark of intellectual *défaillance*. James Hamilton next, suave, ornate, jewelled—of a mind fine rather than strong, but with the loftiest spiritual affinities. After his richly carven eloquence, the massive, restrained speech of Oswald Dykes, essentially great and full of deep reserves. Then a somewhat chaotic interval, during which the shrewd, shaggy face of John McNeill peeps for a space out of its incongruous frame and is gone. Finally Alexander Connell, who added to the classical tradition the touch of Celtic glamour—a hint of visionary ecstasy and of passionate sensitiveness to beauty.

The pageant of the past receding, the present

minister takes the pulpit, and one is conscious at once of continuity and of a break. In a sense Mr. Roberton is in the line of the Regent Square Apostolical succession, sustaining, as he does, the traditional reputation for dignity and reverence in the conduct of the service, and for thoughtful and thought-compelling rather than merely eloquent or impressionist preaching. In all his utterance one is conscious of the appropriative activity of a strongly apprehending mind which not only grips its thought-material by way of intellectual appreciation, but realises it as an actual possession. But here his generic resemblance to his predecessors ends. His coming marks the introduction of a new quality into the life of Regent Square — something more direct, aggressive and adaptable; something in more immediate and vital contact with the life not only of the congregation, but also of the district. One cannot listen to Mr. Roberton very long before becoming vividly aware of a distinctive and unconventional personality. There is nothing professional in his outlook upon life, nothing pedestrian in his conception of the Evangel. One can imagine him attracting and influencing all manner of folk for whom the conventional saint can find no room, for his is, in a conspicuous measure, that divining sympathy which can gather grapes from thorns.

The man who would succeed at Regent Square nowadays, when the casual element is increasing by leaps and bounds in Central London, must have the art of making immediate contact with his hearers; unless he can grip the fortuitous comer on the spot, he may never have a chance at him again. To this

situation Mr. Roberton is entirely adequate. Alert, resolute, tingling with vitality; dowered with a resonant voice, a gift of telling speech, and a convincing personality, he generally gets there at the first try. His sheer directness, warmth of contact, and temperamental dynamic arrest and hold where oratory and artistry fail. He is frankly personal without being indecently aggressive. One has heard greater preachers, but seldom one who demonstrates more immediately and convincingly that the Word has hands to grip and feet to overtake, that there is a quick and living way from the pulpit to the soul. For one thing, Mr. Roberton really preaches; he neither reads an essay, nor delivers a lecture, nor makes a speech. He thinks seriously and practically, and utters his thought in intimate, virile, idiomatic speech, full of saliency and individual flavour of expression. For another thing, he lives in actual touch with his people. Amid the complexity of London life, he has kept the old parish ideal in his eye. As he speaks one divines a hundred threads of sympathetic contact and confidence between him and his congregation. He has many surface advantages, notably a happy instinct for the picturesque, the faculty of knocking sparks out of a plain statement, good gestures, and an effective way of underscoring his key-sentences with his eyes. But what makes these external assets tell to their utmost value is not merely the fact of their being mixed with brains, but, far more, the reality and sympathy which come of actual participation in the life of his people and of a sensitive understanding of their difficulties.

Mr. Roberton is a pleader in the legal sense, deliberately out for a verdict. There is always theology of a well-thought-out kind somewhere in the background, and culture is taken entirely for granted; but, as he said once, "the great thing is to wrestle with your audience. You want the sermon to accomplish something. It's a fight, you know, in which either they or you must win. That is how the prophets preached—and I expect they had to run for it the moment they were done." Mr. Roberton preaches somewhat after this prophetic fashion, and that is one reason why he has attracted such a gloriously mixed multitude to the Sunday evening services of a church with such a formidably classic tradition, a reputation for stark conservatism, and the deterrent inscription *Ecclesia Scotica* over its portals. That a bold and rapid development of the institutional side of the church's work should have been the outcome of such a ministry was only to be expected, but it is equally certain that so long as this ministry continues, the congregation will retain its family character, and all its activities will be made to converge towards the building up of a spiritual household.

Always stimulating, sometimes provocative, on occasion even irritative, Mr. Roberton makes a quick, sure appeal by reason of a robustly realistic quality entirely germane to the modern mind. But while his powers are thus harnessed to the driving needs of the actual world, they are in no wise yoked to its blind predilections and fashionable caprices. Against the modern Laodiceans of life, who dodge along the line of least moral resistance and compromise with reality at every turn, he hurls the

stern "Either-Or" of a God who cannot be mocked. To the religious romanticist, to whose amiable and facile temper Christianity is a means to "happiness," and the Cross little more than an ornamental mascot on the golden chain of pious sentiment, he preaches a Christ who flings fire among men and calls his disciples to stern endurance. He quotes Faber's well-known lines on the wisdom of learning to lose with God. "Hardly poetry," he says, "but how curiously true!" and his appreciation of the wonderful flashes of spiritual insight and intimacy which transfigure the imperfect and often cloyingly saccharine verse of Faber gives a shrewd clue to his own deep-eyed temperament. Without any attempt at fine speaking or creative thinking, his utterance has the charm of a certain freshness, independence, and the momentum of vitally provocative and suggestive thought, driven home with a force which, without bluster, knocks sharply at the gates of the soul. With all his explicitness and unhesitancy, he is never dogmatic where he cannot afford to be dogmatic. An instant sense of the things we cannot know but can only feel gives distinction to his work. Fairly conservative in his theological implications, he is sufficiently daring in his vision, grips reality with naked hands, cares very little for logic-chopping and everything for life.

But it is when he gets home to the inmost heart of the Evangel that the most distinctive quality of Mr. Roberton's work stands revealed. Of excellent and even original preaching there is no lack in these days. Of Gospel preaching of a certain somewhat coarse and superficial kind there has always

been plenty. Mr. Roberton is one of the few preachers who, without abating one jot of the reality of sin and its consequences, take seriously the "foolishness" and indiscretion of a Gospel which makes a criminal and outcast, suffering the just reward of his misdoings, walk with Jesus in Paradise on the very day of his merited exposure and punishment. The reason why most Gospel sermons fall flat is just the suspicion that the preacher does *not* take Christ's amazing *bouleversement* of accepted moral standards seriously, that he regards it as more or less a pedagogic hyperbole wherewith to encourage sin-stricken souls. Mr. Roberton preaches it as the highest morality, and with an absoluteness which is very rare in a Church that has always been somewhat afflicted with legalism. And he preaches it with a certain sunny sweetness of affection which is only found where strength is—a sweetness continents removed from the sentimental tenderness which is the favourite mood of the weak.

The minister of Regent Square takes little share in the wider life of the Free Churches. He has set himself to cultivate his own plot, and that alone gives him a claim to distinction, in these days when ministers seem to have no time for their own specific business. It explains also why Regent Square is one of the few down-town churches that can maintain a well-attended week-night service, and why folk who are more troubled about the queer, stern business called life than about religious conferences and platforms are attracted thither.

X

Rev. J. R. P. SCLATER, M.A.

MINISTER OF NEW NORTH UNITED FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH

ONE frequently hears Mr. Sclater referred to as "a preacher to students." Frankly the phrase has no alluring sound in one's ears. It conjures up memories of services either slouched through languidly, or rattled through perfunctorily—cavalierly treated, in any case, as mere "preliminaries"—and of sermons in which 'Varsity slang and literary preciosity divided the honours, and which postulated a world composed of college dons. But, in the end, one remembers that there once was a preacher to students called John Henry Newman.

The son of an English Presbyterian minister, Mr. Sclater hails from South of the Tweed, passed through Westminster College, and did some years' quiet, good work in Derby before "his own country" discovered that it had a young prophet within its borders. Two calls from London synchronised with the call to the New North Church, Edinburgh, where Dr. Kelman had so triumphantly demonstrated the possibility of getting the Edinburgh student to church. It was the unique opportunity which the New North offered for getting at the very men he wanted to get at that made Mr. Sclater decide to accept its call—"the more sporting offer," he doubtlessly called it—eager to challenge the young, yeasting life

that goes to make our seats of learning such queer and lively places. To a man of his temperament there is no fillip like the unequivocal dissent and the equally unequivocal approval of honest young eyes. A student audience leaves the preacher little ground for uncertainty as to whether he has hit or missed. It does not scruple to show either its contempt for a weak-kneed pulpiteer, or its hearty admiration for the man who knows what he is talking about provided he be "straight" as well.

That Mr. Sclater is a worthy successor to Dr. Kelman is an accepted commonplace by now. In some respects, indeed, his work is a development of and an advance upon what preceded it. This is notably the case in the devotional part of the service. Mr. Sclater makes no attempt at anything approaching to the free-and-easy and unconventional style of service: one could not imagine him appearing in spiritual mufti. Yet there is no sign of apathy or irresponsiveness in his audience. The approach to the service is not exactly the best kind of preparation for worship. There is the usual long wait outside, with its suggestion of a theatre queue. When the doors are finally thrown open, the dull and less than beautiful interior forms a strange anti-climax to the long, expectant, murmurous atmosphere which made the waiting-time so interesting. Soon every available seat is filled. One may hear a staid elderly person remark that all these young people had come "just to hear a man." Even if that be so, it at least gives an edge and purposefulness to their attitude which the average "douce," conventional congregation sadly lacks. Presently the man they have

come to hear appears in the pulpit—a slender, strenuous figure; no dreamer, evidently, yet with a brooding stillness about him. One soon discovers that the stillness is born of worshipful awe. There is a sense of "form," rare enough in the young generation of ministers, a feeling for spiritual etiquette and fitness. If that were all, it would be much indeed, but it is not nearly all. There is also the spirit of prayer; and having said that, one has conferred supreme distinction upon the minister of the New North. The service conforms to the customary usage. Every part of it is thought out. At no point does one sense that covert hurrying on towards the sermon that spoils so many services; even the giving out of the notices is made part of one hallowed act. There is nothing aggressive about the minister's reverential attitude. Its pellucid and unappealing sincerity carries his congregation with him, where anything more explicit might only irritate and rouse that queer contrariness which is the hall-mark of young human nature.

In no wise remarkable for either voice or delivery, and beginning with level intonation and an almost complete absence of gesture, Mr. Sclater's preaching impresses us first of all by a certain lawyer-like quality. He speaks like a pleading barrister who holds a good brief, and keeps his most telling arguments well in reserve. A judicial mind with a mordant edge to it, is one's first thought; a man who could give a witness a decidedly uncomfortable time, and who would not greatly care how deep a *reductio ad absurdum* bit, so long as it served its purpose. The style is not quite the lawyer's, certainly. It is

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the straightest of straight talking; the kind of talk a fellow may resent, but could not despise if he tried. Short, terse sentences; picturesque, concrete words, with more heed paid to strength than to loveliness, and still more to expressiveness. He looks out for the word that bites quickest and deepest, and uses that. Of feeling for verbal colour and music, for rhythm and cadence of style, there is little; such feeling is all but a lost secret among our young preachers. But there is directness to a degree, and there is something keen and vital at the core of it: the words *will* something. But entirely lawyer-like is the acute and remorseless logic that lies back of the words. No preacher of to-day is less vulnerable to the attack of logical analysis. His trained power of darting dialectic is often touched by emotion; it is never eclipsed, or even dimmed, by it. The rebellious hearer finds himself let in for the reverse of an enjoyable time; in vain he seeks to escape the vice-like grip of a logic which is never brutal, and for that very reason the more merciless. One can always defy the mental bully even when he is most right, just because he is a bully. But Mr. Sclater never bullies, and therefore the man who is convinced "against his will" by him finds it very difficult to be of the same opinion still.

There is a noteworthy catholicity about the range of Mr. Sclater's preaching, even to student audiences. His subjects range over the whole field of life. One night he may make a trenchant attack upon the fools who make a mock at sin; the next he will likely tackle the man who is unpleasantly and disproportionately righteous. Again one may, in certain

moods, get impatient with what one chooses to call his undue emphasis of side-issues, only to be put in the wrong by a wistful and deep-going meditation upon the central mystery of the Cross. Never, indeed, can one accuse him of handling even the slightest subject trivially. The awfulness of life, the queer, grim sternness of it, has bitten too deep into his consciousness for that. Sometimes a flash of penetrative interpretation surprises us. "You notice a curious order in this text," he said once. "It runs, 'My soul thirsteth for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' I am afraid some clever people read that, 'When will God come and appear before me? I desire to see God; let Him show Himself to me.' It is a wrong reading. For the vision of God the alteration needs to come in me." At other times one is taken aback by the platitudinising of some pregnant or seminal word, such as he lapsed into when he preached a sermon on the general duty of mental sympathy from the text "Unto the Greeks foolishness." Such a use of texts—and he sometimes makes this use of great texts—is not worthy of his own genius. It is legitimate enough, in a way, but it makes neither for exegetical integrity nor for spiritual insight. But whatever he touches is closely reasoned, and in so far weighty. The argument may be, and often is, of the simplest; but whether simple or intricate, there is not a weak link anywhere. Whatever the subject or treatment, the gift of logical exposition is always in evidence.

In as far as Mr. Sclater is acutely and remorsefully logical, a suspicion of hardness, the chilling touch

of a sharp dialectic gusto invades his utterance. But logic is not his last word. He enjoys bowling over the young man who turns his back upon Christ because he knows ten Christians who are snobs, and who stays away from church because the man sitting next to him failed to pass him a hymn-book; and his characteristic endowment gives him more opportunity for such rejoicing than is quite good for him. But just when one has come to this conclusion, he swings back sharply, passionately. He is pleading now, pleading with the church member who creates the loveless, unbrotherly spirit that repels men from our churches. He pleads with a quiet, vibrant intensity of more than mere emotion, with a tenderness and compassion that can afford to let themselves go because they are bottomed in will and reason. Or, maybe, he is speaking of the friendless in a strange city, of him who wanders through the grey streets with not a single home open to him, not a single heart where he can lay his head, and a frank "Personally, solitude of that kind would drive me near crazy" marks an outburst of genuine feeling. Or again, with a passionate insistence upon the central evangelic note and an arresting variation upon a well-worn word, he turns from the inspiring and stimulating power of our friends' faith in us to the redeeming force of God's faith in us. "You are sick of yourself. You say you are not worth it [the death of Christ]. That is not the point. He thought you were. . . . How can we despair? It is almost the last injury to Jesus. . . . Here stand those who believe in us, and above all, this Lord. Are we to betray their trust? Are we to say, 'In me, O

Lord, hast Thou trusted, and Thou shalt be confounded ' ? ''

No ; it is not Mr. Sclater's logical faculty, after all, that marks him out as one of the most salient and promising figures in the pulpit of to-day. It is rather the sensitive religious imagination which is haunted by '' the queerly stern '' facts of life, and the sympathy that is not mere sentiment, but penetrative understanding and moral compassion. A certain intimacy of conception lends distinction to his touch ; one feels his grip on the slice of life he is familiar with, and within its range he misses very little. But there is just the danger that this very mastery over one section of life may retard his naturalization in another. There are tracts in which his soul is not fully naturalized—notably the region we symbolize by the Cross. He believes that '' the quivering heart of Christianity is found in the Cross of Christ '' ; he has scarcely got to the heart of that Cross. It may be his logical bent does not give '' the blazing scandal and indiscretion of it '' a full chance with him. One rather fancies, however, that the cause lies elsewhere. To put a frank edge to it, he is too perilously adequate to his audience. That audience certainly brings out his present best ; whether it does not bar out his future possible best is an open question. One rather thinks that a few years face to face with a congregation whose experience he cannot quite understand, and with whose needs he cannot altogether cope, would prove an entrance into life more abundant and evoke the sermon he has never yet preached.

XI

Rev. RICHARD ROBERTS

MINISTER OF CROUCH HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LONDON

Mr. Roberts enjoys the reputation of standing in the forefront of a group of younger preachers whose ascendant influence is lifting the reproach of narrowness from English Presbyterianism. Whether that reproach has been wholly justified within the last fifteen years may be doubted. A superfluity of caution there certainly has been; but exaggerated caution, so far from being a mark of narrowness, is rather the peculiar besetment of the liberal mind which, having traversed the field from every possible angle, is possessed by a somewhat paralysing sense of the magnitude of the problem and of the tentativeness and partiality of most current solutions. Timidity to the verge of disaster there has been, too; but, far more than the outside critic could imagine, it has sprung not from an obscurantist mind, but from a heart of consideration for those "little ones" of the faith for whom Augustine so long ago besought the pity of God, "lest they that go by the way trample upon the unfledged bird," and the kind offices of an angel "to replace it in the nest that it may live until it can fly." Be that as it may, Mr. Roberts certainly represents a new ecclesiastical temper and a theological forward movement.

Welsh by birth and inheritance, Mr. Roberts yet

strikes one as far more of a Saxon than a Celt in his mental and spiritual composition. Saxon entirely is his way of seeing things sharp and square, with not a blurred outline or a frayed edge anywhere. Saxon, too, are his sometimes excessive explicitness and his shrewd, reality-loving mind. One may try and account for his pronounced realism of temperament by formative years spent in an English school atmosphere, and by a long and devoted apprenticeship to a religious teacher of so conspicuously sober, restrained, and truthful a mental habit as the late Principal Edwards. The objection to this is that one has known other Welsh boys who went to English schools and afterwards came under the influence of Principal Edwards, and yet remained dreamers or visionaries or sentimentalists or simply feckless, "fusionless" folk, as the case might be; and so one gives the riddle up. Whether he lost it or never had it, there is certainly no trace of sentiment, or rather of sentimentality, about Mr. Roberts, and for that one is unequivocally grateful. But the touch of dream and vision, which is born not of sentiment, but of spiritual passion, is absent too, and one misses that unwillingly. The preacher who sees God through the three veils of wonder, mystery, and beauty is becoming increasingly rare, and one instinctively looks for him in the Welshman or the Gael. On the other hand, the absence of mystic glamour is no disadvantage to the preacher who wants to make religion real to the matter-of-fact mind of London.

But a sober and realistic mental habit does not spell phlegmatic temperament in Mr. Roberts. Of fire and intensity there is no lack in his preaching. Begin-

ning quietly enough, he soon swings into a dynamic, striding style that pulls the hearer along, and leaves the slow-paced a little breathless and out of composure. He scourges forward under a steady, pushing force, as it were ; the words come quick and apt, all modern to a point and grouped in distinctively modern phrasing. Every point is beaten out and beaten in, sent home with an exuberance of telling, vigorous language, driven still farther when it already seems as far in as it will go, and not left until it is as securely fixed as words can fix anything. Then, having made his climax, he slackens for the next point, only to be caught again in the impulsion of his own driving power. He is honest and uncompromising to a degree, never hesitates to force unwelcome social implications of the Gospel home where they are most resented, rejoices in carrying war into the enemy's camp, knows what he wants, and sticks at nothing that is honest to secure it. A preacher of the fearless, prophetic type, modern to the finger-tips, an enthusiast for social service, yet old-fashioned enough to be aware that a man cannot get very far without theology —a blend sufficiently rare and abundantly attractive.

Mr. Roberts has made not a few successful experiments in preaching. One of the most noteworthy was a series of "theological" sermons on "The Christian Faith and the Modern Mind," planned on the most serious and thorough lines possible in preaching to an ordinary congregation, and providing no cheap short-cuts for the lazy and casual. Long sermons they were, too, several extending nearly to the hour, and believers in the "short, simple, and bright" theory prophesied dark things. But instead of the

expected slackening of attention, the congregation, large at any time, increased steadily in number and in interest. Mr. Roberts has not a few special qualifications for the task of mediating the Christian faith to the modern mind. He has, *inter alia*, a theological conscience at once too tender to allow him to score a point at the expense of God's little ones, and too robust to let him sacrifice the imperative demands of the truth to the unreasonable exactions of the weaker brother, who has been permitted far too long to tyrannise over the Church to his own detriment as well as to hers.

Like not a few of our rising men, Mr. Roberts is at once a High Churchman and a somewhat trenchant critic of organized Christianity. He tells us, at times with rather unnecessary vehemence, that organized Christianity has largely failed. Few would care to controvert this. Yet his critique stirs one with the misgiving that if the Church had largely succeeded instead of largely failed, we might not have been better off in the things that make for inward peace and perfection. For, after all, it is better to fail even through one's own fault than to succeed shallowly and prematurely, and history has warned us that where the Church needed to be saved once from her failures, she has needed to be saved ten times from her successes. It is doubtful if the Church ever will succeed in Mr. Roberts's sanguine and explicit sense, especially if she ever will succeed in subjugating that "man in the street" whom he sets in a place of such supreme importance. He would have us believe that Apostolic Christianity succeeded with "the man in the street," but that individual as he understands him is

a distinctly modern product, and never walked the streets of the Apostolic world at all. St. Paul once experimented upon the class which came nearest to him—the men of Athens. He certainly did not succeed; and if one reads the meaning of history aright, that is a cause for rejoicing. No, with all Mr. Roberts's patent competence and prophetic fire in dealing with the present religious situation, one is left unconvinced that the line of the Church's true success lies by way of the "man in the street." But Mr. Roberts has not done with the subject yet, and one may look forward to interesting developments of his bold and capable work, both on the critical and on the constructive side. His strongly constructive bent of mind and a certain generosity of outlook divide him sharply from many other challengers of the Church. Much of the "inside" criticism of the Church within the last twenty-five years has been marred by a feminine propensity to scold and nag. Once we shut our eyes to the Church's faults; to-day we tend to shut our eyes to everything but her faults. Mr. Roberts has rediscovered the lost chord of discriminative sympathy and open-eyed hopefulness, and is once more making music instead of the jangled noise of vituperation that has so largely passed for criticism.

Perhaps Mr. Roberts's finest gift is the art—or is it the grace?—of being sharply provocative without being in the least provoking. He will often evoke opposition, but one is equally sure he will seldom provoke animosity. His fearlessness of attack is tempered by a reasonable understanding of the other man's point of view. His denunciatory talent is held in check by a warm and genuine human goodwill.

If he does not suffer fools gladly, he has as little patience with the esoteric culture of the superior person. That he prefers "the man in the street" to the man in the pew might do the former quite a great deal of harm, if he were present; as it is, it does the latter an appreciable amount of good by way of lessening his complacency. He does not always hit the mark, but he is always interesting and suggestive. Most certain of all it is that he will never have a dull time: he is evidently out for a verdict—and he gets it.

BAPTIST

I

Rev. JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., D.D.

SENIOR MINISTER OF WESTBOURNE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, LONDON

THE visitor to Westbourne Park Church who has learnt to use his eyes may get a fairly vivid and accurate conception of Dr. Clifford long before the sermon. No preacher is more revealingly reflected in his audience than the grand old man of Nonconformity. That audience is still one of the most interesting in London. It is a mixed multitude, not so much in social standing and culture as in spiritual outlook and conviction. It contains an unusually large number of men obviously out of sympathy with the preacher's beliefs, and as obviously in sympathy with his personality. They do not pretend to join in the worship, but there is nothing hostile or contemptuous about their attitude; in many cases, indeed, they follow a prayer, a song, with the wistfulness of them who would "enter in" but cannot. There is also a fair number of young heretics and eclectics, who minister to one's sense of humour by their scrupulous and marked abstention from singing hymns, or parts of hymns, to whose doctrinal contents they cannot subscribe. One may call it a pose, yet there is something promising, too, in this vigorous assertion of the young egoist conscience.

On a number of faces there lies the unrest of the anchorless soul. These are they who have run from

empty shrine to shrine, from creed to creed, without making port, and are within sight of that perilous dead sea of indecision whereon exhausted souls fluctuate idly without term or scope. In sharp contrast to their sterile unrest is the militant attitude of young agonists who are fighting their doubts, and gathering strength, and who find a congenial home in this strenuous church. Dreary middle-age, with its disillusioned enthusiasms and faded interests, is there also, seeking rejuvenation under the spell of the youthful veteran whose unquenchable optimism has the secret of revival "in the midst of the years." And, wedged in between "sinner" and heretic, critic and doubter, and all the motley elements of the casual hearership, are the citizens of this Zion—young people joining in the service with palpable zest; old saints with faith-lit eyes; families united in bonds of double kinship; unknown, lonely "friends of God" of whom the world is not worthy—a typical suburban "family" congregation, in short. And as one takes in every detail of this complex "manscape," one asks oneself what there is in this uncompromising old warrior that can unite so many different and opposite elements round his ministry. One might well have expected to find a keen, alert crowd of more or less one type—the type that is keenly interested in politics and social reform, and in one definite line of both these things. But here are men and women who evidently do not care greatly for either of them, old-fashioned believers, for instance, and ultra-modern individualists in revolt. What makes these rub shoulders with each other and with the heterogeneous, uncongenial crowd on every side of them?

The answer may be given in the words of one who is by no means a supporter of Dr. Clifford's views and policy, and who thus described his personality eight years ago:

"A short, slender man stood before me clad in grey. He was thin; the first impression was one of weakness. But he seemed all on wires; the strength of his will was felt to dominate and electrify the attenuated frame. Despite the prejudices which had so recently been aroused, I knew that I was in the presence of a great man; I realised in a flash that here was a born leader, the apostle of a creed which might be mistaken, but must still be counted with because his was the leadership thereof. Here also there was something in his atmosphere, something in his environment, in his *aura*, call it what you will, which imposed not merely attention and respect, but a sense of mysterious sympathy. Here, I understood by intuition, was the type of the father-confessor, the man to turn to in trouble, the gentle, indulgent friend who would be a very present help and comfort in the hour of need."

This remarkable testimony goes straight to the secret of Dr. Clifford's power and influence. If he has done more than any other single man to fulfil Palmerston's famous prophecy that "in the long run English politics will follow the consciences of the Dissenters," if he stands in the public eye to-day as the greatest of non-professional political leaders, it is because he is far more than a political leader, because he has the power of evoking "a mysterious sympathy" in those who least agree with him, because he has never lost that old evangelical "passion for souls" which

drove him into the ministry fifty-four years ago. Why does that staid and sober middle-aged man who votes Unionist go to Westbourne Park and nowhere else whenever he is in London? It is because many years ago, when he was an aspiring young man, alone in London, Dr. Clifford had got up at six every morning to meet him and others like him for the study of Butler's "Analogy," and Logic, and New Testament Greek, and Ruskin. Why does that confirmed agnostic haunt this church? Because once, when doubt was still an acute and desolating anguish, Dr. Clifford was with him in the darkness and the storm. These worn-down, patient women, these struggling toilers, why do they come? Not because they care a straw about any kind of politics, but because the man who so often preaches politics helped them in their troubles as if there was no other question for him than just to find work for this man and to help that woman bear her burden.

Surely not a fighter this! one is tempted to exclaim at the first sight of that still, ivory-white face, but rather a student. That fine, frail-looking shadow of a man was never meant to cross swords with coarse-grained demagogues. Those sensitive, nervous hands were made to hold crucibles and microscopic slides rather than to clench and thrust in debate. Those dim and misty eyes, with their mingled expression of scholarly wisdom and human kindliness, were meant for study, surely, and that great, craggy brow, which dwarfs every other feature, is that of a speculative thinker. Then he rises to sing, and one understands. He sings in vigorous staccato bursts, his mouth well open; and in that mouth the fighter

is revealed. It is an unequivocally militant mouth —a straight, unyielding line cutting sheer across the pensive meekness of the rest of the face—sudden, hard, uncompromising, without a curve to soften its rigour. One cannot imagine it being half open. It spells hard hitting and an unconcealed, though never vicious, joy in the fight. He carries himself with the ease of the old warrior, and without any of the arrogance born of nervousness. Suddenly his frame becomes tense and vibrant, and a stream of eloquence is hurled out of the quivering body. There is the pointed forefinger of warning and menace, the passionate thrust of accusation. His voice is clear, firm, explosive. When he guards against letting it drop, it carries to every corner. Quiet in exposition, it rises with his rising passion in a spiral of far-piercing inflections that stir the blood. His speech tends to savour more and more of the platform. Plain, blunt, rough-hewn, couched in vivid, every-day English, his sentences grip and bite. He has no time for fastidious word-building or the exacting cult of phraseology. His utterance has no other dignity save that of fitness and sincerity. A tang of irony relieves his striding passion, a touch of homely humour softens the cut and thrust of controversy. His is uncompromising but never ungenerous.

Of fighters we have a good handful even in these conciliatory days, but Dr. Clifford is more than a fighter. He is one of the few in any age who have shown themselves content and willing to be on the losing side. He has never been caught watching which way the cat was going to jump. There is always a plenitude of doughty champions of popular

causes in our assemblies of whom it can safely be predicted that they will never be on the losing side. Dr. Clifford is made of sterner stuff. Again and again he has seen God stand upon the losing side, and given unfaltering obedience to his vision. Voltaire's mordant *dictum* that it is the misfortune of most worthy men that they are cowards would find much easier acceptance with some of us if we did not know men like John Clifford.

I have heard Dr. Clifford preach many fine and quite unpolitical sermons—Scriptural expositions informed with sound scholarship and full of luminous suggestion, prophetic utterances of haunting appeal and glorious inspiration. But I have never had so clear and full a look into the soul of the man as in listening to a distinctly political yet profoundly religious utterance of his on the Sunday night after the passing of the Veto Bill in the House of Lords. He described his feelings during that memorable sederunt. Sitting in the gallery of the House for four long hours that were but a moment, the veteran saw visions and dreamt dreams. He saw once more the long, fierce battle for liberty of conscience and religious equality. He saw the tough, dragging struggle to secure full citizenship for the Jew and the Roman Catholic, and to open the Universities and public positions to Nonconformists. He lived through it all once again, feeling the impact of the champions of liberty upon the privileged classes, and the brutal bludgeonings that beat them back again and again. He himself had stood in the high places of the field during the last long pull that had extended over so many stormy years. Small wonder that his eyes glis-

tened and the sharpness of triumph gave edge to his voice. Small wonder that he relieved his surcharged heart in a burst of thanks to Almighty God, and in a solemn charge to the young people not to relax their efforts. For them it was the dawn of a new day of battle, to him light at eventide. And as I listened I thought not so much of what this simple Baptist pastor had accomplished in the world of national affairs, as of the moral rectitude, spiritual vision, and unfaltering devotion to principle in which he had accomplished it; not so much even of the power of personality as of the triumph of faith.

II

Rev. CHARLES BROWN, D.D.

MINISTER OF FERME PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, LONDON

A LARGE, not greatly beautiful, interior, unequivocally Nonconformist in every line and angle; a nondescript, middle-class congregation, filling every corner and joining in the service with frank heartiness; and, in the pulpit, a quiet, tired-looking man of "pastoral" aspect. One takes in the unremarkable details, and an old *dictum* of the preacher's, to the effect that his election as President of the Baptist Union meant "the apotheosis of the commonplace," recurs to the memory. At first sight, the phrase seems appropriate enough; there are those, indeed, who deem it so appropriate that they content themselves with the first sight. The preacher in the audience—and there is generally at least one—looks round at the dense crowd of eager, absorbed faces, and back at the simple, plain-spoken man in the pulpit, scanning word and thought in vain for the saliency and brilliance that spell popular success. "Tell me," his eyes ask of the preacher, "tell me wherein thy strength lieth." He has been told that even when Dr. Jowett had preached within a stone's throw, Ferme Park Church remained crowded from roof to floor, and he marvels. Sometimes he goes away believing that the secret of such preaching

is in its unambitiousness and spontaneity, and he determines not to devote quite so much time to pulpit preparation in the future. But when he is assured that Dr. Brown is extremely laborious and thorough in his preparation, he resigns himself to puzzlement.

But while the deeper springs of this preacher's power lie hidden, one open secret gives a clue to the rest—the intimate relation between pastor and people, which emerges especially in the prayers. A rare and beautiful bond is here: of the managing fussiness which boasts of keeping a finger on the pulse of every petty organization there is not a trace; of a vital sympathy which reflects the joys and sorrows of the congregation to an extent which must tell upon the minister's physique there is abundant and convincing evidence. Dr. Brown belongs to the happily once more increasing class to whom pastoral visitation is a holy ministry; one could not picture him, like a very eloquent preacher it was my misfortune to know, writing to one of his regular members three months after his death.

Watch the preacher begin his sermon. There is nothing of self-consciousness, let alone of pose. One could not imagine him delivering a "message." He has striven for spiritual things, for the Vision behind the veil, and he is telling out something of what has come to him as man to man. His tired and somewhat incurious eyes fling no challenge to the crowd; now and anon they suddenly look out with a keen and unexpected directness—that is all. He gives out his text and, in the simplest of language, indicates his main line of thought.

His speech is candid and lucid. No dust of ambitious

or esoteric phrases dulls its limpid stream. Throughout it is the utterance of a pastor, who cares more for the needs of his people than for the approval of the sermon-taster. He does not flirt with theological or philosophical issues for whose thorough mastery he has no time, nor does he edge his thought with the tinkling little bells of sensational artifice. Beginning quietly, and avoiding that extreme tension of spirit which is so beset with the peril of reaction, he rises in force with the gathering force and widening suggestiveness of his theme, and leaves one with a sense of something neither profound nor original, but mighty, something born not so much of mental activity as of spiritual gravity.

Having given his main line of thought, his eyes close for a little. The sermon lies fully written out before him, but it is not the sermon he preaches. Those passages that grip and burn in their simple intensity are not in the manuscript; that is why his sermons do not make good reading. He thinks on his feet. Now he is looking inwards. With eyes closed, he is telling the people what he sees. He is moving among spiritual realities, in the life that lives behind the brain. His eyes open again. He is looking intently into his left hand. A flippant young man suggests that he is about to give a lecture on palmistry; a little girl asks her mother what the minister has in his hand. But the lines he is reading are the lines of the soul, lines of this man's defection, of that woman's misery; lines bitten in by the fires of hell, and magic lines of eternal fortune.

His knowledge of human nature is perhaps the first thing which warns the obtuse hearer that his applica-

tion of the "commonplace" *dictum* was not altogether a credit to his powers of penetration. This preacher, obviously a man of simple life and Puritan habits, to whom the theatre and the club are *terra incognita*, has an insight into our corrupt respectabilities and sham cults which the fashionable novelist might envy. He knows the steps of that appalling progress from a pampered childhood, through a self-indulgent youth and a sordid, selfish middle-age, to a mean and dishonoured senility, with a knowledge whose quiet utterance burns and leaves a whitening trail of fear behind it. He has brooded deep over the tragedy of stifled aspirations and murdered ideals. He has been smitten to the heart by the pathetic futility of ineffectual spiritual promptings. He has followed the soul that sinneth from its first flamboyant hour of uncurbed passion to the last cold hour, putrid with the sick leavings of sterile lust. He knows also the no less terrible hell that yawns beneath the mincing feet of the conventional religionist, and could give a *Clarion* man points on respectable hypocrisy.

So deeply and unflinchingly has he looked into the naked face of life that his eyes, if not his lips, have unlearnt how to smile, and a touch of abiding sadness is upon all his speech. Superficial hearers write him down as a pessimist, but they are wrong. Below the garmenting of a sad and sobering knowledge pulses a mighty heart of hope, rare even in a so-called optimistic age. For his is that deep-rooted, unconquerable hopefulness of the prophet who, looking out upon a grave situation, sees with unblinking eyes that there is "none to help," and wonders

that there is "none to uphold," but sees also with no less sure a vision the Divine arm that bringeth salvation. He has a keen and steady eye for all the bitter evils of mankind, and among them there is one—sin—whose desolating face has bitten so deep into his soul as to dwarf all other evils by comparison. But to dwell upon that horror of darkness without dwelling still more insistently upon the light of the Divine Saviourhood he would count the supreme betrayal.

To see the reality of a Saviour-God standing over against the reality of sin; to see them both sharp-edged, palpable, vital, and the first as indisputably and solidly real as the second: this is what puts to this preacher's mouth a reed to lure and quicken the timeless heart of man. Here is the eternal note that calls to every age and is of none. A rare thing that, and sufficient to lift a preacher to the plane of true distinction.

And a closer acquaintance with Dr. Brown's ministry gradually brings further discoveries of the unusual and unsuspected. One doubts if there is any other popular preacher who yields so much hidden store of soul and character to the patient observer.

There emerges, for instance, a certain high carelessness of the things that make for success and honour, and with it the fine leisure of him that believeth. Too many of us, in these teeming days, are fevered and fretted by the fear of being either too far behind our age or too far in advance of it. If we have gained the coveted place in the vanguard, we are haunted by the fear of dropping behind. Scarcely past our youth, we already hear behind us the footsteps of

them who coming after us are preferred before us, and our knees tremble. More and more, life is tending to become an ignoble gallop, with the whip of vanity and ambition behind and the carrot of success before. But this preacher, at any rate, has learnt—or was the secret born with him?—that he who truly possesses himself has found his inalienable place in life, and that a minister of Jesus Christ neither envies nor loses.

Deeper still in the bedrock of his personality is a quality which, under different spiritual skies, would issue in monastic asceticism. To define it as the Puritan spirit would be to provincialize it, for the same quality is found in men whose consciences allow them a considerable indulgence in pleasures and pursuits which the Puritan mind condemns. It may best be described as a deep, abiding, dominating sense of "dedication"—an almost priestly temper, breeding that gentle but absolutely impassable discretion against which all worldly lures fling themselves in vain. A simple-hearted man of genial company, there lies behind his kindliness an inward principle of distinction, selection, refusal. He is not everybody's man, not his friends', not even his own. He has committed himself.

And, deepest of all, there is the thing we call singleness. Through Dr. Brown's best preaching there booms an unconscious anathema against the complexity and multiplicity of our divided hearts and cleft minds. There is no hint of denunciation in either word or manner; it is simply the preacher's innate singleness striking sharp and clear against the chromatic modern temperament—a singleness not

so much of a man who deliberately sets himself to do the one thing, but rather of him who can only do the one thing, and can only do it whole-heartedly and unreservedly.

It is these rare qualities, and chiefly the last and deepest of them, which so often invest his utterances with a distinction and a dignity that have something of spiritual magic in their apparently unaccountable emergence. And yielding ourselves to that magic, we realise that "the apotheosis of the commonplace" should have read, "the recognition of the unusual."

III

Rev. F. B. MEYER, B.A., D.D.

MINISTER OF REGENT'S PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, LONDON

"EVERYBODY'S Mr. Meyer" a free-and-easy Brotherhood journalist called him recently. "He takes all mankind for his province" was applied to him by a more conventional penman. And herein lies the secret at once of his well-deserved popularity and of his failure to reach his rightful place as a preacher. He has chosen to make adventures upon public life and work in a hundred directions, and as he nears the three-score years and ten, so far from looking at us out of dreary, disillusioned eyes and telling us that all such labour is vanity and a vexation of spirit, he lifts an eager head and, like Oliver Twist, asks for more. Starting as an evangelical of the evangelicals, and a Keswick man to boot, he contracted the conference habit in a chronic and incurable form. Brought into the heart of submerged London, his social conscience was stabbed broad awake, and he added the social gospel to his message. Since then he has opened out in directions too numerous to mention, and it has become an accepted commonplace in many quarters that in plunging into the thousand and one religious and social movements, for which he not only finds the time, but to which he gives of his exhaustless fund of vital sympathy, he has found his true vocation.

To presume to determine what is or is not another's true vocation is in all cases an impertinence. But one may be allowed to speculate upon the heights which Dr. Meyer might have scaled had he rather specialized in preaching after the severe and exclusive manner of a Jowett. Some cocksure judges will have it that he preaches as well to-day as he could have preached under any circumstances, that the fluent, pathetic, rapidly constructed and broadly effective order of his present pulpit work is the measure of his native genius. Such a judgment would be rash even in the case of the most commonplace of pulpiteers. Remembering under what strangely obstructive conditions most men's work is done—how they are clogged, baffled, fettered, a prey to a hundred influences of circumstances, need and temperament—remembering, too, how often, in the dullest, some revealing instance of unsuspected capacity suddenly flashes forth, one may well be diffident and tentative. As for the powers and possibilities of a nobly-dowered preacher such as Dr. Meyer at his leisure and under the most favourable conditions, they are among the last things one can hope to divine; but it takes no great amount of insight to tempt one to regret the tightly-twisted rope of manifold activity which has pulled him back from the edge of pulpit greatness. I have heard Dr. Meyer at his worst, when the exigencies of a perfect tornado of meetings made anything like adequate preparation, or even freshness of approach, a physical impossibility, and even then I never failed to see two men in the pulpit. One was an over-driven conference preacher reduced to vivacious fluency; the other

a discrowned lord of the pulpit, whose nobility ever and anon betrayed itself in an almost unconscious touch of genius, and only awaited larger leisure to make it patent. I have heard Dr. Meyer at his best also, and still seen two men; for between even his best and the majesty of the might-have-been there is a space that cannot be spanned by happy eloquence and a graceful mastery of what is only one province of his true kingdom.

To realise at once his actual excellence and his opulent possibilities, however, it is best to get him not at his worst, certainly, but not at his best either. Some quiet Sunday evening at Regent's Park, when he is very much *en famille* with his own people, and when the slackening of the religious season allows him a larger leisure, will prove the most revealing occasion.

At such times the service wears a strangely personal and intimate aspect, and constitutes part of the preacher's message. In the smooth, graceful progression of prayer, reading, and praise, one is reminded of a pastoral landscape, seen with quiet, gladsome eyes. No cold and solemn dawn is there, no menacing sky or harrying wind, but clear sunlight falling on green pastures and still waters, where kindly shepherds lead their willing flocks. There may be something perilously near the domesticating and prettifying of great ideas; there will certainly be much lily work upon the pillars. Above all, there will be sympathy, a humble understanding of the casualness of man's habitation upon the earth, an almost maternal compassion for our human sicknesses and sorrows. The sympathy may specialize in a petition for domestic servants, whose

"pent-up lives" are spent in "waiting upon another's will and never being able to assert themselves."

This peaceful clarity and warmth is reflected in Dr. Meyer's more external endowment. His appearance is expressive of his personality, suggesting spiritual fastidiousness and a sweet and sun-washed serenity of soul. Somewhere in his eyes a dream sits lurking—a shy, elusive, soaring thing which his pragmatic habit has vainly tried to tame into an "angel in the house." His gestures—often informed with a keen and revealing expressiveness—combine with the word to achieve something like verbal sculpture. His language, never anything but loftily simple, has the lustre of a fine instinctive fitness, and his is the great manner that can be intimate without a suspicion of impertinence, and whose familiarity breeds no contempt. So simple and intimate, indeed, is his utterance that many hearers will scarcely divine the art that conceals art; but the practised will soon realize with what consummate ease and subtle mastery of effect he handles speech and thought, and how enchantingly he plays upon an instrument whose limitations are known and accepted by him.

A certain graphic quality, not merely picturesque but actually pictorial, gives a touch of the palpable and thrilling to his utterance. This turn for vital evocation often emerges in his treatment of Old Testament narrative. He will take an old-world Bible story, dim as a piece of faded tapestry, hollow and remote as a half-forgotten legend, and touch it into life, not by transliteration into the cheap jargon of the hour, but by free translation into the terms of the eternally human. A moment before we thought

we had but a fragment of antiquarian lore; he gives us instead a much-thumbed chapter from our own life, a passage from our haunting past, a bit of our perplexing present. The faded tapestry is shot through with glowing colour. Truism stands invested with the rosy freshness of new truth. History becomes news—quick, keen, pungent with the salt of life. His handling reminds us of the great Rembrandtesque manner, which, by the play of light and shade, can make the meanest interior interesting and romantic as a fairy palace.

But of all Dr. Meyer's vital evocations, his limning of the Christ—a limited Christ, it must be admitted, with the deepest tragedy and the most awful joy left out—is the most beautiful and intimate. His vision of the Christ is kin to that of Blaak when he painted his *Christus Consolator*. His is an entirely winsome Saviour, whose healing dress is ever by our beds of pain, whose touch banishes sorrow, and whose friendship brings a deep happiness into lonely and yearning hearts. The preacher's serene spirit is naturalised in Cana and Bethany, on the Mount, by the Galilean sea, and in all that wide sunlit region where simple souls who know not what it is to be offended in Jesus flock to His call as doves to their windows and, nestling close, are made glad and strong for all their days. Within these quiet, flower-edged borders, he is consummate master of every tremulous movement of the spirit in its quest for peace and joy, of the engaging, delicately-adapted ways in which Christ is wont to meet it, of His coy approaches and sweet intimacies, and of the gentle discipline of His unchafing yoke.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest—" might be the fittest summing up of Dr. Meyer's gospel. His very voice, in its blend of plaintive sweetness and firm, assured conviction, is a commentary upon it. His gestures underscore it. His homely beauty of phrase translates it into the soul's vernacular. There is not a soul in the world but may be captured by the spell of this mellifluent preacher, for the labouring and the heavy-laden divide the world between them, and not the hardest of human rocks but sometimes feels his pathetic inadequacy and helplessness. Thus it is that Dr. Meyer may appeal to every mother's son of us at times, and leave us untouched and even a little impatient at other times, when the blood runs hot and red and a sense of hardihood and potency thrills every fibre. Then one craves for a less delicate and timid touch, for something that one can take hold of with naked hands, something that will at once satisfy and control the splendid and dangerous forces that run riot in such moods. But soon the grim, grey life of a toilsome city blanches our lives again, and we come back, weary and heavy-laden, tired of mental strife and moral struggle, to catch hope and comfort from the quiet, refreshing vision of a great Friend and Burden-bearer standing with arms outstretched and eyes in which comprehension and sympathy play like a flame. This is the vision which Dr. Meyer throws upon the drab canvas of our common work-a-day life, and which sets him among the preachers who take the soul by the hand and lead it out of the shadow into green pastures and to the waters of comfort.

IV

Rev. THOMAS PHILLIPS, B.A.

MINISTER OF BLOOMSBURY CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, LONDON

CHURCHES, like persons, are sometimes known at first sight; subsequent acquaintance amplifies, but neither corrects nor deepens the initial impression. Bloomsbury is of this order, and on my first visit a few chance happenings went to intensify one's almost instantaneous comprehension of its genius. Thus, on asking the way to it, I found that only one out of the four persons I approached could speak English with anything like intelligibility, and I realized that the Superintendent of Bloomsbury was in some sense a "foreign" missionary, and the bishop of the diocese of Cosmopolis. Arriving there at last in time for tea, I found myself sitting next to a very wise person—a pilgrim from America—who assured me that Bloomsbury was "too simple for anything, and its minister the simplest thing in it." She contrasted it with some of the great institutional churches in New York City, where they have "rooms for everything." I gathered that at her special Zion there was a room for old ladies to brew and enjoy a quiet cup of tea, and another where old gentlemen could fry the humble herring over a safety gas griller; a room where hard-rushed speakers could prepare their orations, aided by silence and a plentiful supply of pens and paper, and another where the lonely but loquacious could relieve

their conversational cravings to a special staff of sympathetic listeners. I admitted that Bloomsbury fell far short of such an ideal, and asked what would happen if by any mischance a harassed speaker should stray into the room sacred to tea-making old ladies, or if a rampant conversationalist in search of sympathy found himself amid the odour of herrings fried in silence by taciturn and irresponsive old men. After that I turned my attention to the simplicities of Bloomsbury and its Superintendent.

Bloomsbury Church is emphatically a family centre. This is partly due to the somewhat cramped premises, but more largely to the fact that at the head of it there is not an organizer, but a big human who loves and understands central London and the denizens thereof, and who, through constant, sympathetic contact with naked human nature such as suburbia cannot show, has gained a knowledge of life which might have surprised our American friend. This sense of his vital contact with the life of Bloomsbury, more especially with its human wreckage, strikes one at the first impact. A few kindly words of welcome, a sympathetic inquiry or two, and he lets himself be lured into a talk about the men who drift to his vestry out of the hard, merciless London streets, and only too often drift out again into the grey waste of despair, sometimes into the blank coldness of suicide. And it is not the talk of a *dilettante* skirter of the great abyss, or of a collector of the picturesque in the mud of life, certainly not the talk of a professional parson keen on "cases." It is the vibrant, pity-smitten, keenly sympathetic utterance of a man whose natural liking for his fellows mingled with his

passion to redeem is the very nerve of his preaching. There is a simplicity, a spontaneousness in the outgoing of his soul towards these "brothers of the night," as he calls them, which brings the breath of the Galilean Gospel into an age in which even Christian kindness tends to be somewhat sophisticated and institutional.

Hearing Mr. Phillips in certain moods at a crowded Sunday evening service, when he aims at the dim, crude understanding of the casual hearer whose soul stares wistfully towards God out of a battered, perplexed, groping life, one might be deluded into thinking that a rough-and-ready translation of the eternal mysteries, not so much into the language as into the mental and moral terms of the street corner and the market-place, is all his message. On such occasions he deliberately paints with a broad brush and with a boldly impressionistic touch, avoiding all subtleties of gradation and all finer and more elusive values. Listening to him again addressing his Men's Brotherhood, one senses the democrat, the leader in good causes, the champion of despised hopes, the "men's man" who can hit straight from the shoulder, and lives in a world in which the man who is true to his mate is of more account than the man who sings in the choir. A blunt, pragmatic man of broad sympathies and popular aims, one might pronounce him, judging only from his talks to men and from some — but only some — of his Sunday evening addresses.

But there is another side to the picture—the side that matters most and is the soul of all the rest. One can often get a fair glimpse of it on Sunday evening;

one is almost sure to get a living insight into it on Sunday morning. To judge any kind of Central Mission fairly, one should go to a morning service. There the hidden sources of spiritual strength, the subterranean springs that feed the sunlit river—or the lack of them—stand revealed, and, having a finger on the pulse of the Mission, one may venture upon an opinion.

The morning service at Bloomsbury is even more of a family gathering than that of other Missions. There is little to describe. Only an air of engaging homeliness, a brooding calm, and the uplift of a strangely awe-filled voice uttering itself in reverent intimacy—and one is caught up into the mysterious and profound life of prayer which is our real world. The sense of spiritual contact, of eternity brooding over time, dominates the entire service. It speaks in the demeanour of the people; it is latent in the preacher's look—the large, steady look of spiritual imagination; it invades even the delightful homeliness of the children's address. We are on enchanted ground, where the soul stands poised, expectant, giving ear to the silence, heeding the quivering voice of invisible Light, awaiting the stirring of the incalculable Wind among the reeds of desire.

In the sermon a characteristic blend of logic and mysticism is the first thing that strikes. Mr. Phillips was a distinguished student at Bangor University, where he fell under the spell of Professor (now Sir) Henry Jones. He took honours in philosophy, and still carries the student's heart through the exacting routine of his crowded life. But while, every now and again, some chance reference, or flash of dialectic

skill, reveals his wide reading and large freedom of the realm of systematic thought, his deepest philosophy is not of the schools. "As a boy I was much troubled with apparitions," he sometimes says, "and second sight was not unknown in our family." He is still "much troubled by apparitions"—by whaups of the imagination that go crying over the grey streets of London; by cities of eternal beauty rearing their white towers on the grimy stones of Bloomsbury; by a thousand thrilling hints and intimations of that far-off divine event towards which Shaftesbury Avenue moves. Many sorrows come to the man who is thus troubled, but many good things also, and this among them: that he is saved from mistaking his self-consciousness for his real self.

He looks exceedingly youthful as he stands, slim and straight, with the glow of the supreme vision upon his face. An engaging intimacy and pastoral touch give a welcome homeliness to his utterance; a gift of evoking the spiritual atmosphere makes awe and magic about him. Some have tried to explain this gift of evocation in terms of personal magnetism; the real secret of it is that singleness of soul by which a man lives wholly and intensely in the Unseen. Many there are who sing the songs of Hellas beneath a half-accepted Cross, or dream wistfully of Zion with faces turned towards Babylon. But here is one who, partly from innate simplicity, partly by reason of an instant vision of his Lord, sends the whole weight of a fervid personality along one unwavering line. One feels the intensity of purpose, the reality of spiritual contact. A joy falls into the heart; an ardour touches the spirit; a conviction stabs the conscience.

For half an hour at any rate, the unprovable becomes the true, and the spiritual the natural. One has heard more distinguished preaching ; but here is a touch of that spiritual immediacy which transcends all formal criteria. In his more elaborately prepared discourses Mr. Phillips often achieves greatness. One need only think of his Baptist World Alliance sermon, which so competent a judge as Dr. Newton Marshall described as "a mighty intellectual feat, an oratorical *tour de force* such as is rarely witnessed, and which will undoubtedly rank as one of the great sermons of this generation of Baptists." But in the very simplest of his Sunday morning sermons the spiritual magic which is the core of great preaching is never missing.

To see a vision of the New Jerusalem descending upon the dusty and sinister pavements of London, to weave a magic web upon so rough a loom as the motley life of Bloomsbury is the gift of this practical mystic, and while they have not "a room for everything" at Bloomsbury Church (for which one is not sorry), there is "a room" for each and all of the tragedies, aspirations, struggles and yearnings that make up the life of central London in the sympathies of this most large-hearted of preachers.

V

Rev. J. T. FORBES, M.A.

MINISTER OF HILLHEAD BAPTIST CHURCH, GLASGOW

A GLASGOW acquaintance of mine, who is by way of being a superior person and not much given to church-going, informed me that he "didn't mind" going to Hillhead Baptist Church occasionally, because the congregation there did not jar upon his fastidious soul by reason of an air of unintelligence, and because the minister said "some quite good things, and made no noise over it." On the whole, I did not disagree with my friend as much as I had anticipated. Hillhead congregation certainly wears a look of intelligence and quiet interest, which makes it somewhat conspicuous even in a city which gives of its finest intellect to the membership and service of the Church of Christ. And there is no doubt that Mr. Forbes says an extraordinary number of really excellent things in the course of a single sermon even, and does so in as noiseless a fashion as is consistent with speech at all.

There is something strangely startling about extreme noiselessness, and as the still small voice falls slowly upon a strained, expectant hush, one is conscious of a tension curiously akin to the opposite excitement produced by impassioned oratory. Something about those still tones, those low inflections and restrained accents, rouses a feeling of indefinite anticipation—one expects a word of God to be borne

on so still and unassertive a medium. And so one sits waiting, waiting for one hardly knows what. Many things come to reward one's expectancy, and yet one is not quite sure if the thing one has waited for is among them; and so one waits on, and the end of the sermon finds one still waiting. Meanwhile, one has participated in a feast of good things, and is eager to come again in search of even better.

The stillness is part of a fastidious and discriminative temperament, meticulous in its deliberately selective tendency. There is much care in the choice of expression, the conveying of subtle shades of meaning, an evident dislike of hyperbole, paradox, or rhetoric, and an instinct for grace and purity of style. Reticence is marked above almost every other quality—not the blunt-edged, assertive reticence of the stubborn, self-contained man of affairs, but the high, proud, sensitive reticence of the student, whose deliberately cultured life has made the world a prickly irritation to his soul. At times the reticence utters itself in an almost ironic self-effacement; more often in an almost uncannily impersonal attitude. Nothing is more readily mistaken than reticence. Shyness is often mistaken for it, when in reality the shy man craves to communicate himself. On the other hand, the man of surface frankness is often deemed communicative, when in reality he may be using such frankness to hide the secret of his personality. Mr. Forbes is genuinely and completely reticent. One cannot imagine him consumed by a desire to communicate himself, though a quiet but intense desire to utter his message is evident enough. Should one approach him, one might be sure of a courteous reception; but

one could not imagine him heaving a sigh over one's departure—so self-poised and self-contained a nature does he seem to possess. And here, on the very surface, lies the secret of the one thing lacking to that still small voice which conveys so many things to the hearer. It is always his deliberate thought and conviction he gives us; never himself, never the instant made eternity, the thought which is not a matter of deliberate culture and sweat of brain, but flashes across the soul like a white bird; which is, indeed, part of the passionate history of the soul. This is not a question of autobiographical preaching. With few exceptions, the preacher who is given to autobiography is an egotist, and the egotist is the last person in the world to give us his true self. But it is a matter of self-communication, in the sense in which a God who hideth Himself, and is full of majestic reserves, yet gives Himself to the death for His people. Mr. Forbes has a mighty word—potent, searching, fruitfully suggestive—but it is not himself; it is not the word made flesh. And that is why, having our hands full of the good treasure of his preaching, we still cry out for something more.

There is nothing in the least pliant or "sweet" about Mr. Forbes' quietude; it is incisive, rather. There is something astringent about his extreme neatness of phrasing, his exactitude of expression. Everything is taut, not a loose thread anywhere. The literary touch is conspicuous. That accomplishment of neat, precise, graceful phrasing was not born in a day. Almost every sentence bears the impress of deliberate culture and delicate word-building. Free from the barbarism of over-elaboration and verbal

embroidery, the beauty of his style lies in its clear, exquisite and austere simplicity; but his is a simplicity so delicately cultivated as to share with the vice of over-elaboration the peril of using English as if it were a dead language. Yet nothing were further from the mark than to conclude that Mr. Forbes's endowment can be summed up as proficiency in *l'art de bien dire.* His preaching is not merely good literature; it is far more good thinking. The word "brainy" does not fit it at all ill; there is a distinct preponderance of intellectual over emotional power. He speaks so finely and arrestingly because he has first thought so acutely and patiently; he does not speak lambently and thrillingly because he has not felt passionately, because he has not given his heart an equal chance with his head. His calm is not phlegmatic; it is vibrant with intellectual intensity, lambent with moral passion. It is lit with many lights; it lacks but one —the sanctuary lamp of the loving heart that ever loses itself in its object.

The ethical note clangs like a sunken bell underneath the wide waters of his varied and intricate utterance. Few who heard it will readily forget his noble sermon in connection with the Baptist Union meetings of this year (1912) and the deeply ethical, not merely narrowly moralistic, interpretation of the authority and power of Jesus—an authority which even the Son of God had to realise and earn by translating it into power through moral victory and self-surrender. Every now and again, the understanding hearer was startled by a sudden flash into the very heart of a baffling problem, into the dark depth of mystery itself. Quiet as the sun on the grass these flashes of

insight were, and yet they struck with the swift, quivering touch of lightning. "Within the authority He received from His Father was the authority to die —to lay down His life by a free act. . . . And this authority spoke in the urging of His own nature. . . . He could not act below Himself. He could not act below human need. His enemies summed up the moral position: 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save.' . . . Christ received a commission to save. He was the sent of God, but He had to become by experience what He is. He occupies His life-dispensing throne because of absolute fitness. . . . His authority had to join to itself power. . . . After the temptation in the wilderness we read that He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. He was making His divinely-given authority into dynamic by victory. . . . Over against sin He set His self-surrender. He bears it on His heart as God has done and does. He reveals the passion of God. . . . The missionary command in its fulness is given when the authority in its fulness is made His; when it is based not only on a decree, but on the experience of a life. . . . The disciples passed from being mere holders of apostolic authority to become possessors of spiritual power. . . . Nothing in the authority which Christ wields over human beings is arbitrary. It is authority not only given but won; it is morally based in experience. Christ holds a certain authority . . . because a certain choice has been made again and again." In this reiterative, cumulative manner, which is more than merely reiterative and cumulative, the preacher enforced his profoundly ethical conception of the work of Christ,

letting all the bright, dry light of his disciplined intellect beat upon this ever mysterious theme. His thought and the language that clothed it seemed to work with the sharp insistence of a graver's tool. His voice often took on a didactic severity. One divined the hardness of a calm, gently-moving, aristocratic soul beneath even his most glowing words, and the hardness of the rough, blunt man is as putty beside it.

Yet, ever and anon, the calm, siccant voice vibrated towards emotion, verged on passion; the grudging gestures took on a fluttering, revealing expressiveness. One fell to wondering what might not have been born in this preacher had he been forced by circumstances to think on his feet, or to work at a breathless pace and with inadequate tools—to make bricks without straw. One cannot help wondering if then, perchance, when the ambition for leisured thought, artistic simplicity and craftsmanlike finish was baulked at every point, he would have commanded the legions of angels that ever attend the straitened and baffled sons of God, and, finding no small coin in his scrip, say:

> "Bring me my bow of burning gold!
> Bring me my arrows of desire!
> Bring me my spear: O clouds, unfold!
> Bring me my chariot of fire!"

Who knows? And then, perhaps, one might find not only the thing one waited for in Mr. Forbes's preaching, but the thing one never dreamt of. But these are speculations. Meanwhile we have in him a preacher of individual distinction, a thinker who impresses by sheer weight and sincerity.

VI

Rev. NEWTON H. MARSHALL, M.A., Ph.D.

MINISTER OF HEATH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON

SOMETHING old-world and primitive lingers about Heath Street Baptist Church, and it is not easy to realise at first sight that a thoroughly modern ministry is carried on there. It seems impossible somehow that the worshippers in this most unadorned and homely of sanctuaries should ever be troubled by the thousand and one problems that vex the twentieth century Christian. Its quiet walls seem to be the natural home of simple souls, easily pained by cold inquiry into the mysteries by which they live; of serene minds in whose soil the Cross takes root unopposed and flourishes; of hearts that are not offended in Jesus and draw sweet nurture from hard sayings. And knowing that such is not the case, one asks oneself to what this impression may be traceable. In part it is due, doubtless, to the unmodern architecture and interior fittings which bring the old-time chapel back to one's mind; but the deeper reason is found in the air of brooding leisure which emanates from the pulpit. That Dr. Marshall finds London a leisurely place is not to be believed; yet one divines a wise solicitude on the part of office-bearers and workers which has secured to their minister his birthright of occupied leisure—time not only for reading and thinking, but for that contemplation

which is the most fruitful and exacting of all forms of "inaction." One feels, in short, that Dr. Marshall has a margin to every page of his life, and those of us who fill our pages to the very edge with the multitudinous scrawl of our business, or rather our busyness, only to realise at the end that it is not the page, after all, but the margin that matters most, cannot but envy him. No doubt, he does his share of complaining of the want of leisure; but, at any rate, he has escaped the humiliating process of being melted down for the tallow trade, and thus his preaching bears the fragrance of brooding thought, and listening to him one feels oneself enlarged. One can only walk on the breadth of one's feet, and yet one needs so much more to walk on. A Sunday at Heath Street gives one that "so much more."

And one gets something else that is extremely unmodern—the sense of being snatched from the inutile noises and preoccupations of the world into the hushed and holy assembly of the elect. A well-known popular preacher remarked that the Church would have to be a very much smaller thing again before ever it could be a bigger thing. It will have once again to turn to a world which sneers at the little flock of "superior" saints, and frankly take it at its word, saying, "We *are* a little flock and we *are* called apart by God." It will take great boldness to say this at all, and great grace to say it in humility and brotherhood; but said it must be sooner or later, and the sooner the better. It is this spirit that radiates from Dr. Marshall's ministry. With all his breadth, he is deep-rooted in the old Baptist tradition, with its insistence upon evidence of conversion as a

passport to Church membership and upon separation from the world as a distinguishing mark of the Christian man. Turning over the leaves of the hymn-book, one half expects to find such old Baptist classics as

> "Religion is the chief concern
> Of mortals here below,"

or

> "The people of the Lord
> Are on their way to heaven."

But instead one comes upon the latest prettifying of great things by some ultra-Faberian hymnist, and realises once again that, in spite of the severe and bracing "separatist" atmosphere, one is in a modern place of worship and about to hear a sermon from a preacher steeped in modern thought.

But long before the sermon, one is caught by the charm of an exquisite children's address. Dr. Marshall has a very fresh and individual gift of talking to the children, and is specially happy in his delightful retelling of the story of Jesus. If one happens upon a fragment of such recasting of the golden Story, one is fortunate indeed. Very old and dry one would need to be not to listen with sheer delight to stories about "when Peter and James and John were little boys together" and made mud pies, and went fishing on the lake, and learnt that queer Hebrew alphabet at school, where the teacher told them of that very wonderful Person who was to come straight from God and set everything right. That they all wanted to be soldiers under that great Leader and carry bright, sharp swords that could really kill a man dead goes without saying. And then the preacher will show them grown up into the right kind of young

manhood and following a grim man in queer clothes called John the Baptist. And then one day a strange man will pass their way, and John will nudge them and say, "Look at that Man! That is the Lamb of God." It is all very simple and naïve—one of those simple little things that look so cheap and cost so much in the making and finishing.

The prayers have the rare note of catholicity. Much of public prayer falls dead, not by reason of insincerity or lack of fervour, but because, while cast in collective form, it is private and personal in spirit. Even the saints are busy with their own affairs and interested in their own idiosyncrasies and tastes; but here are petitions that well up from a heart at leisure from itself, and none is sent empty away. I remember one prayer in which the circle of intercession ever broadened instead of narrowed, till it embraced the great unknown multitude which we can scarcely realise, let alone touch in vital sympathy. "We pray for the people whose names we have never heard, who live under conditions we do not know, whose customs are foreign to us; for the hordes whom our most vivid imagination cannot realise, but who are known to Thee."

Dr. Marshall has written at least one really fine book, revealing an unusual degree of philosophical acumen and a darting insight into the crux of theological problems, and several smaller books containing much that is valuable and suggestive. He has the endowment of the systematic theologian, and is most happy and fruitful in courses of sermons forming consecutive expositions of Christian doctrine. His power lies not in his style, which is no more and no

less than the average style of the cultured man who has some imagination and the knack of writing or speaking good English, nor in his force of personality. There is little personal dynamic of the immediate and palpable kind. At first sight a certain softness and amiability seem to take from the strength of his spoken utterance. He impresses one as a man who, while essentially strenuous and energetic, has matured under large and genial influences. The slow, grim, silent struggle against bleak circumstances which makes a man's jawbone show white and square through the skin is not his portion. His work has at no time been easy; but it has been congenial, and within the limits of his strength.

Yet there is, perhaps, no successful preacher in London who has more completely escaped the temptation to minister to the fancies and wishes rather than to the real needs of his constituency, or who has more resolutely resisted the temptation to become a crowd-minister. "There are those who tell us," he said, in the course of a sermon on "A miracle thrown away" (the feeding of the five thousand), "that if preachers would only speak to the daily needs of the multitude, they would get their places of worship crowded. Well, he would be a poor man indeed who could not fill his place of worship somehow. But a church which is true to the substance of the message entrusted to it must be ready to refuse those who would join with it merely for the accomplishment of material ends." And it is this unaggressive but impassable deference to the inward standard, this spirit of inoffensive but rigid selection and refusal, which keeps an impression of lovable geniality from

becoming an impression of weakness, and suggests the impregnable rock beneath the velvet turf. One does not wonder that such a spirit should feed persistently and intensely upon the Cross. Again and again, in speech and in writing, he magnifies the death of Christ, not indeed in terms of an obsolete theology, but in terms of the universal Christian soul which in every age clings to a Christ "who loved me and gave Himself for me." "The thing that sent a thrill and a shock through all the human race like the sudden quiver of a galvanic battery, so that ideals and institutions and characters were changed with an irresistible power—this thing is . . . the death of Christ. It is not merely the fact that the spirit of Jesus passed away from His body at a certain time that made out the meaning of the death of Jesus. The whole ministry of Jesus was a death-struggle on the one side. He was in a sense dying all the time, whereas He might have resolutely lived. . . . The sufferings of Jesus are so tremendous because they show, not what God exacted, but what God paid. . . . God in Christ means God in Christ crucified." These sentences, taken at random from a course of sermons on the Atonement, afterwards published in book form, are the key-words of Dr. Marshall's message. One of the most philosophical of modern preachers, he yet speaks, as many popular gospellers do not, to the universal heart. For his philosophical culture is the blue rock-flower that nestles amid the cruel stones of the place called Calvary.

VII

Rev. A. C. DIXON, B.A., D.D.

PASTOR OF THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, LONDON

DURING the comparatively short time Dr. Dixon has been among us, he has impressed himself upon the popular imagination as a remarkable and interesting survival—as the man who, in an age of liberalism and progress, stands for a cast-iron conception of Inspiration, for an uncompromising evangelism of the school of Finney, though without Finney's sombre passion, and for a world-view in which evolution has no place. He is talked of as the man who is trying to put the hands of the clock back. His diatribes against "Mr. Darwin's" baseless hypothesis have evoked columns of newspaper correspondence, giving cause for amusement to some and for indignation to others. He is pilloried as the last thing in obscurantism. But when we come to analyse it, none of these things is so very noteworthy or curious. As I have already pointed out in the case of Dr. Broughton, who might be taken as a liberalized and greatly modified edition of Dr. Dixon, there is still room for men of the older convictions, and so long as thousands upon thousands of our fellow Christians are won and edified by such teaching, we need not greatly concern ourselves about its lack of breadth and larger insight. And coming to close quarters, is it Dr. Broughton's or Dr. Dixon's old-fashioned views

that are the characteristic feature of their ministries? Is it these things that attract even their own special constituencies? Is there not something far larger and more valid to account for their solid success?

Not long ago a typically modern preacher of pronouncedly liberal views expressed his surprise that the new interest in religious psychology initiated by William James should not have had a more practical effect upon preaching, directing it more explicitly and purposefully to what in the old phraseology was called "soul-saving." He marvelled that the rehabilitation of conversion as a fact of experience has not been followed by a revival of "preaching for conversions"; and went on to say that, while his own gifts were not of the rousing and evocative order, yet, in his quiet, somewhat didactic way, he made it his definite and earnest aim in every sermon to speak the word that might initiate a great change in some soul present. Now Dr. Dixon is not merely a stark and intolerant adherent of the old conception of Christianity. If he were merely that, he would not be worth discussing; sensible men are not greatly interested in other than geological fossilizations. But he is first and foremost that ultra-modern thing—a "soul-saving" preacher; one who makes conversion his definite objective. He is by that much ahead of the times, and our young progressives are but slowly making up to him. It is this naked and unashamed "being out for conversions" that makes it worth while, and very much worth while, discussing him. That he is thus pledged to the work of conversion places him above all merely negative criticism of his views. The one really legitimate

subject for criticism is not "Are his views antiquated or reasonably broad?" but "Does he do the perennially modern work he has pledged himself to well or ill?" He is an evangelist, a soul-winner, and that means a great deal in this languid age of ours. It is, in fact, the one thing that makes any minister supremely interesting and worthy of respect. How does he acquit himself in this task?

He has, to begin with, the advantage of a splendid physique. Standing considerably over six feet high, he carries himself with soldierly uprightness, showing off every inch of his stature and making it tell to its utmost worth. He has a winning voice—clear, resonant, refined, replete with suavity and charm. A certain sweetness of nature is palpable; one could not imagine the Gospel message being stained on his lips by acerbity or odium. Even in his most dogmatic moods he keeps his goodwill untarnished. These things are glorious assets for the soul-winner. His manner of preaching, too, is distinctly happy in its appeal to a very large constituency which, on the one hand, would neither understand nor appreciate subtler methods, and, on the other, would be repelled by the grim, harsh dogmatism of a Torrey. He is picturesque; cinematographic, one might say. He has the knack of giving a pungently vital retelling of an old Bible story, as he sees it "right now"—a picture full of colour and movement such as children of all ages love. His stories come in a never-ceasing stream; and there again he has his constituency with him, for the folk who go to the Metropolitan Tabernacle still believe in anecdotes (they call all forms of narrative-illustration anecdotes)

as a means of grace. His thought and language are of the simplest. On the occasion of his first sermon at the Tabernacle, he assured the little orphan children that he would endeavour to preach so that every child in the congregation could follow him. This, too, goes greatly towards success. I know a preacher who indulges himself in buying every volume of children's sermonettes he can get hold of. As he has no children himself, and is not in the habit of giving children's addresses, his friends wondered at his choice, until he somewhat sardonically explained to them that he found these volumes supplied him with exactly the sort of material that his congregation could follow and assimilate.

Dr. Dixon has succeeded in once again filling Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and, even taking the reduced seating accommodation into account, this is a remarkable feat. He has the power of dragging some twelve hundred people out on a wet and woebegone week-night to listen to what a daily journal called his "handling of the threadbare fable of Babel's tower." And they do not merely come to hear this new American voice. Every Wednesday night pastor and elders are busy with anxious inquirers, and with the many who are seeking admission to the membership of the Church. All the branches of the work—and there are many—are flourishing, and bigger things yet are under consideration. Like all Americans, Dr. Dixon thinks big, and his deacons are often out of breath in their efforts to keep pace with his restless and striding practical intelligence. His latest scheme is nothing less than the buying up of the famous Elephant and Castle inn to be used

as a Bible repository. But whether his people can keep up with his stride or not, their love and admiration remains. At his first anniversary he made the naïve confession that he had been praying God through the year to help him to be an Englishman. He hoped to make England his home for life, and he wanted to be English in every way that English is Christian. With all his magnificent adaptability, there is one respect in which Dr. Dixon will hardly succeed in being "English": one cannot imagine him reducing his bounding and adventurous temperament to the somewhat lethargic measure of our slow-going English ways. He is chock-full of gloriously audacious and Brobdingnagian plans, laughs at impossibilities, thinks in millions where others think in hundreds, and propounds his schemes with such overflowing geniality and convincing enthusiasm that not a few of his people are beginning to believe in them. In certain respects he is as conservative in his methods of work as in his theology. He does not believe in the mechanism of modern sensational evangelism ("we are no evangelist," he once said). He stands for what he calls old-fashioned conversions on Bible lines, relegating emotional "camp-meeting conversions" to the tabooed sphere of the "modern," which is his bug-bear. Yet he is as aggressive as any of the "moderns," believes in after-meetings, and frankly calls for testimony. But there is with it all a certain grace and delicacy which stamp him as something more than an average representative of this importunate school of gospellers.

That there are large classes of people to whom Dr. Dixon's message and methods fail to appeal

is obvious; and it is a limitation which he shares with most preachers of whatever school, for the men whose influence is more than sectional are few and far between. He appeals specifically and explicitly to those who can still accept the old creeds and conceptions, and whose spiritual sensibilities and experiences are of an unsophisticated and somewhat crude order. One would not like to think of a young and impressionable soul imbued with modern ideas under his drastic spiritual surgery, and it is not difficult to imagine that such tragedies will form an inevitable part of his ministry. Yet, within its own scope, that ministry is of a most powerful and valuable order, and has its place not only as a mighty spiritual agency among its special clients, but as a significant and salutary "word of prophecy" to those who can read the signs of the times. A large section of modern Christendom has abandoned the doctrine of Sacramental grace and transubstantiation without laying a corresponding stress upon the vital and spiritual transubstantiation of redeemed souls who feed daily upon the Bread of Life. The result has been an inevitable decline in the strength and influence of the Churches, and the success, not only numerical but spiritual, of such a ministry as Dr. Dixon's forces it home upon the reluctant modern consciousness that "what all the world's a-seeking" is not, in the first instance, deliverance from antiquated ideas, cramping creeds, and tyrannous ecclesiastical systems, but deliverance from itself. The man who preaches this Gospel may lack trenchancy of thought, width of outlook, and subtlety of insight; but so long as he brings to "sunk, self-weary man"

that which can turn the bread and wine of animal life into the Body and Blood of Christ, he will drag nets full to the breaking, where the cultured and subtle pulpit essayist will toil all night and take nothing. And Dr. Dixon fulfils this order of ministry with so winsome and powerful a natural endowment and so sincere and single-minded a spiritual purpose and passion that he commands respect even where he cannot win assent.

VIII

Rev. C. H. WATKINS, M.A., D.Th.

MINISTER OF WESTBOURNE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, LONDON

When Dr. Watkins began his work at Westbourne Park, he told us, *inter alia*, that just as Dr. Clifford had not spent his life in repeating himself, so he would not spend his in repeating Dr. Clifford. "And as for my saying what I think, dear friends," he concluded, "don't trouble about that. You leave that to me, and pray for grace to bear it." A few base and incompetent judges gave it as their verdict that this was "mere bluff and piffle, the swagger of a clever and self-confident youngster." But those with eyes to see knew that, whether this was a wise thing to say or not, it was entirely and absolutely true. This "youngster," who had been level-headed enough to decline an important call in order to give himself nine long years of training for the ministry, had it in him to think fearlessly and independently, and to strike out a bold, individual line. There was something about him which implied not only the power but the right to say what he thought. And from the beginning his preaching was essentially individual. Whether he sees things wisely or less wisely, he sees them with his own eyes through his own soul, and gives a relentlessly faithful translation of that sharp, square vision of his. He has entirely escaped the apologetic timidity that is in bondage to the

weakest brother in the assembly, the most squeamish hearer in the audience. To hear him preach is an experience, an adventure. One has not only heard a new sermon ; one has discovered a new man.

That Dr. Watkins will not fail to jar and disturb at times is a foregone conclusion. An individuality so sharp-edged must sometimes prick a sore spot. As likely as not, a hearer trained in a different tradition of worship and churchmanship may find himself frankly irritated at the first impact ; if he is no more than a partisan, the impression may end there ; if he is something bigger than that, irritation will soon merge into captivation. Among the first words I ever heard Dr. Watkins utter was a reference to the Church as an organization which, in spite of all its faults, was still there for us to love and rally round. To one who believes that this attitude of "rallying round" a poor, faulty Church is a greater menace to her than the denunciations of those who would sweep her clean away, this came with a jar. But the superficial friction was almost immediately transcended by the recognition of a personality at once winsome and deep, possessing many qualities rare in themselves, and rarer still in combination. One attractive and unusual blend strikes one at the very outset. Dr. Watkins is evidently a man who does best in genial soil, gives and needs kindness, and finds it easy to be genially confidential and communicative. But over against this is an almost fierce independence, an almost flamboyant disregard of other people's opinions, an all but reckless impulsion to say the unpopular thing, to run counter to the favourite prejudices. This combination spells strength of a rare type. He does

not need to affect a rough, brusque demeanour in order to convince folk that he is a man; standing four-square upon his birthright of independent thought and action, he can afford to let the kindness and geniality of his soul flow out. Some of us who are used to a more reserved and impersonal pulpit manner are a little surprised at the many autobiographical references; but none, except the obtusely undiscerning, could set them down to egotism or vanity. They are clearly the outgoing of a strong-bedded, experimental nature—a nature bent on enforcing its testimony by a constant appeal to what it has seen and handled of the things by which men live.

Nine years of hard study have not desiccated Dr. Watkins, nor loosened his grip upon life. His style is quiet, but frankly and racily colloquial; at times even his bold spirit feels itself bound to apologise for an over-homely illustration, or an audacious saying that might be interpreted as sheer irreverence. He talks our common talk with an added force and verve, a keenness and pungency, which come of his individual genius. His words are alive, they bite and burn. Of fine talk there is not a trace, of deep thought many a one. The absence of sentimentality is welcome. A marked maturity surprises in one so young. There is an ease of handling, a sureness of mastery which is rarely found except as the result of long years of discipline and practice. What surprises one still more is the uncompromising way in which this young preacher looks into the heart of ugly facts, his instant sense of the tragedy rather than of the pathos of life, his unsparing and relentless concern for truth. To get at the truth at all costs; to know the truth about

oneself, not the estimate of other people; to face the truth about sin, not the likelihood of its consequences —this is the thing he urges and re-urges, with this he flings himself against his audience, beating and hammering it in till he knows it has gripped, here and there at least. This is preaching, in the specific sense of that loosely-used term; it is an assault upon the will and conscience, a charging of the soul's citadel. The voice calls quietly enough, yet there is a cry in it. Calm and colloquial as the talk is, it calls from deep to deep. He has heard the voice that says "Cry," and has answered "What shall I cry?" and been made sure of his burden. One has heard many a still small voice thundering at the gates of Mansoul, and one knows many men who yell but never cry.

To get Dr. Watkins at his best, one should try and get him on one of the great, deep, unpopular subjects which we remember so seldom and so unwillingly—sin, perhaps, or, better still, repentance. As he tells us, some strange providence has made it impossible for him to forget or to underrate the universality and tremendousness of the fact of sin. It has been his lot to meet an extraordinary number of outwardly respectable men who have sins of the explicitly bad, black kind on their consciences, men who sin deliberately and tempt others to sin, yet walk the world as professing Christians, and men who feel the sting of sin and are eaten up with remorse. When he was at Mansfield, his acquaintances charged him with pessimism; but, after being given a look into this strange experience of his, they marvelled at his optimism. A man into whose consciousness the fact of sin has bitten so deeply may in time allow this

consciousness to deflect into an obsession, and preach a gospel of gloomy introspection and preoccupation with the underworld of human life. But Dr. Watkins does not believe in a gospel which stops short at diagnosis. His soul demands a positive therapeutic, and thus it is that, while he has looked deep into the naked face of sin, he is not preoccupied with sin. He is in love with repentance. It is scarcely too much to say that he is a modern preacher of repentance as the most sublime and joyful thing in a sinful world. He has re-discovered repentance as a thing to make men and angels rejoice together. No penitent-form type of preaching is his. He believes that men are not promised nearly enough if they repent, that they are rather confirmed in the belief that repentance is a shameful, humiliating thing. While it must needs bring pain, it is also the "open sesame" that yokes all the great remedial and reconstructive forces of God's universe to the broken chariot of the man who turns from his sin.

So he will tell us in that clear, crisp, forthright way of his what repentance is not. It is not merely a state of mental pain. The soul that has sinned often turns upon itself, like a serpent burying its fangs in its own flesh. There are men going about with calm, impassive faces, but with the serpent's fang in their brain, men who in torture bite upon themselves. It is not being angry with oneself for having played the fool. That is merely conceit, and to talk of sin as "playing the fool" is not to speak in moral or religious terms at all. Neither is it fear of hell, for that is mere self-interest, nor horror of being found out. And at this point Dr. Watkins may bring in the story of a friend of his, who

declared that, in a certain event, she would "die of disgrace." "But she wouldn't," he says sharply. "She is too good a woman for that. It is only the people of putty and pack-thread who die of disgrace; people with any strength in them die of something far more important than that. . . . Sin is its own tragedy; the things we have tied round it are only trimmings."

Passing from what repentance is not, this young preacher will rise to something like passion in expounding the glory and sublimity of a repentance which means a turning round on the sea of life to run with the wind of God's purposes, a revulsion from the thing below man's dignity to the realization of God's ideal. If repentance means, first of all, to know the truth about sin, and then to feel its anguish and tragedy apart from the pity of its consequences as God feels it, then perfect repentance is beyond man's reach, for man is an interested party and his verdict will inevitably be influenced. And here Dr. Watkins, while not committing himself to Moberly's theory of Jesus as the only true Penitent, makes admirable use of it in showing that, so far from repentance being a shameful act, it calls forth a man's highest and noblest. It spells retrieval, manhood, progress, vision, life itself; and the pity of it is that our false shame and foolish prejudice should cheat us of this birthright. We are afraid of the criticism of those better than ourselves, and, marvellous to relate, we are equally afraid of the criticism of those worse than ourselves; we are actually ashamed of being better than other people.

In closing the preacher will perhaps have his righteous

fling at those who would tell a man that what he has written he has written, and that not all his tears can blot it out again. "This," he says, "is a suitable sentiment for Omar Khayyám, but I don't like it in the pulpit. The moment a man repents, the great remedial and reconstructive forces are at his disposal. He may have sown seeds of disease, brought harm to other people; but a great deal of that can be undone. . . I hope this won't sound irreverent, but what is God for, if not to undo evil? And who dare put a limit to that undoing?"

Preaching like Dr. Watkins' is not meant to be reduced to cold print. His is the magic spell of the living word, of individual impact of prophetic clamancy. Such preaching is great in one significant sense of the term, and can no more be nailed down in black and white than the note of a bird or the accents of immortal passion.

METHODIST

I

Rev. W. L. WATKINSON, D.D., LL.D.

In one salient sense, Dr. Watkinson is an essentially modern preacher. But for the unmistakable maturity, ease and expertness of the master-craftsman, he might be a young man fresh from college—so successfully does he address himself to the thought and temper of the age. He retains the young man's delight in browsing luxuriously in all manner of literary pastures, speaks in modern terms, though his style has the dignity and opulence of a more leisured period than ours, strikes the modern note of social sympathy and sensitiveness to the pathos of the human, is colloquial with the difficulties and aspirations of the new generation.

A closer study, however, reveals a difference. If his matter keeps easy pace with the flying years, his manner of presentation reveals his kinship with an earlier, and, in some respects, a more fruitful time than ours. For his is the explicit, architectural manner of preaching which is almost a lost art in these impressionist days. He not only draws out a bold and spacious ground-plan, builds his points up one by one, hammers away at them till they stand secure against the winds of inattention, and adorns his pillars with the fine clear lilywork of illustration. He also caresses those points with a lover's regard, lingers over them with deliberate appreciation,

preaches for himself, in short, as much as for his audience. Balance, weight, deliberate and loving workmanship are characteristic of all his utterance. Upon a certain type of church-goer his mass and volume must fall somewhat disturbingly. A diet of impressionist pulpit *soufflées*, whipped up in high hollowness or filled in with bread-crumb, does not conduce to the appreciation of such preaching as his.

From anything like heaviness, however, Dr. Watkinson is saved by his consummate artistry. His is that sure, indicative touch whose lines are firm and purposeful as the drive of a plough, but never clumsy or flat. Workmanlike, he leaves nothing undefined, and does not expect his hearers to save him the trouble of thinking, It may be said that this explicit handling ignores the overwhelming power of the unspoken word, and there is truth in this contention. On the other hand, much of our passion for suggestiveness has its root, not in a mystic sense of spiritual immediacy, but in a distinctly unspiritual laziness. At any rate, Dr. Watkinson's explicitness is the exuberance of a fertile mind, not the beating out to its utmost thinness of what is thin enough to begin with; in consequence, it never suggests oratorical jugglery.

It is not to be wondered at that so characteristic and competent a preacher should have attracted crowds of men in his time to the famous noon-day lectures at Manchester, and held them by sheer vigour of thought, range of information, and force of temperament. Much water has run beneath the bridge since then, and the crucialities of yesterday have become the irrelevancies of to-day. But in spite of

shifted emphases and changed situations, these lectures, in their printed form, still make a powerful and valid appeal. In those earlier days Dr. Watkinson did not spare his trenchant gift of sarcasm. With sharp gusto, he hurled himself against the conventional sceptic who sets up shop with a handful of second-hand doubts and an inexhaustible stock of self-complacency. By dint of a pungent mixture of shrewdness, irony and humour, which supplied many keen and unexpected side-thrusts, he made such a man look the fool that he is, and demonstrated, in a thousand and one mordant ways, that rationalism is one thing and reason another. At times he was less than chivalrous; now and again he fell into the mistake of breaking a butterfly upon the wheel; not infrequently he underrated the enemy. But interesting and provocative he always was, with the clean, sweeping, relentless style of the born fighter—the man who gives no quarter because he can afford to have none given to him. Even in the lighter play with the rapier of kindly wit, he was a formidable opponent.

To-day the mellowing of the years has veiled, though not dulled, this keen-edged militancy of temperament. A deeper and more instant sense of the brevity of our human habitation, the pathos of our antagonisms, the pitifulness of our limitations has sheathed the sword-blade, and overshadowed the just depreciation of what is false and worthless by the loving appreciation of what is true and lovely. But the old salt has not lost its savour. The voice is still eloquent of the sting and tang of a sharp wit and a formidable sarcasm, of a certain suspicion of

shrewishness also, something tart and bleak as the fruit of the gean tree. A more than sensitive temper, inclined to wear rough at the edges, may also be suspected. And yet that same voice betrays a nature that can grow tender over—well, not drowning flies, but over the homely, simple sorrows of common folk, and that can rise to selfless indignation and generous passion over a brave cause. How characteristic that voice is, and how nicely adapted to the cut and thrust of polemics! It still retains its long, low growl of mockery, its ironic squeak, its sarcastic patience and satirical meekness, its infectious vibrations of sheer humour and drollery. And through it all there runs the indestructible fibre of that old "Methodist manner," making a tantalizing pattern out of the modern web of his nature. At one moment he converts the pulpit into a platform, the next his changed voice, sliding down a vowel as a boy slides down banisters, suggests the little country chapel with its well-worn penitents' bench.

Not infrequently, the play of his irony stirs a vague resentment in a certain type of hearer. The man in the pew may have long suspected himself of being a fool; but, however proud he may be of the infallibility of his judgment in general, he does not relish hearing this particular instance of it confirmed from the pulpit. It is at this point that Dr. Watkinson's genial humour often saves the situation. Suddenly the sarcasm merges into a sally of comradely chaff, and the man in the pew unbends and beams in delighted response. He can thoroughly understand and appreciate a verbal slap on the back and the broad friendly chuckle that accompanies it.

"God laid the foundations of the earth, though you were not there, and yet they are well laid." "There is a great deal of good about us, you know; a great deal that is good—more or less. We are like the fruits of a certain island in the Pacific, which are very plentiful, but all imperfect in one way or another—very good, only there is something the matter with each one of us."

To most hearers Dr. Watkinson appeals through his extraordinary power of illustration. Here no preacher can rival him for ease, range and sheer artistry. Drawing very largely from books on natural science, there is yet nothing mechanical or external in his use of such reading. His illustrations are not only memorized; they are seen through a temperament, and almost recreated by discriminative juxtaposition and careful re-setting. There is no suggestion of the scrap-book, no artificial and boring excavation of "lessons" from all manner of unlikely quarters. One remembers a sermon on the words, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe," in which a simple illustration was made memorable. Speaking of the futility of the downward look of realism—as though acquaintance with evil could avail to inspire the soul with a passion for righteousness—the preacher recalled the cunning stratagem by which Swiss guides manœuvre tourists safely over dangerous places. They draw their attention to the exquisite flowers that fringe the narrow mountain path, and so avert their eyes from the giddy precipice and bring them safely to their destination. So the soul that allows itself to be allured by the charm of whatsoever things are pure and lofty and of

stainless beauty will be blind to the imminent blandishments of evil, and skirt the bottomless abyss without so much as knowing it.

To Dr. Watkinson it is given to retain, after many years of unremitting labour, a unique measure of popularity and width of appeal such as are given to few young men. With the casual religious public he is a prime favourite, for the casual public is held by saliencies of speech and manner, and the originality and exuberance of Dr. Watkinson's idiosyncrasies capture it immediately. His sensational and abundant gestures, the unforgettable inflections of his voice, the keen play of his shrewd humour—these are qualities which carry the most lethargic crowd, and impress the preacher upon the most sluggish imagination. The thoughtful public, again, is held by his mental vigour, his strong, clear reasoning, his flashing power of illustration and insight. Preachers admire and envy the clarity and finish of his workmanship, his homiletic genius and apologetic adroitness. And the young everywhere surrender to his appeal. For if there is any one thing that dominates in this veteran preacher's outlook upon life, it is his full-blooded ideal of virtue, his positive *plein-air* conception of goodness. Here lies the secret of his perennial youthfulness, his passport to the glorious company of them to whom at sunset is given the morning star.

II

Rev. J. ERNEST RATTENBURY

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE METHODIST WEST LONDON MISSION

It is the melancholy fashion of "one man" movements to pass with the passing of their founders, and not a few anxious souls saw in the death of Hugh Price Hughes the undoing of his work. They forgot that it was made out of imperishable stuff, that it was built upon something better than his keen-edged intelligence, explosive eloquence, dynamic temperament, genius for organisation and leadership.

> "'Twas made of his sighs,
> His tears and agonies,
> The fire of his eyes."

It grew straight out of that mighty heart of which it is even now so hard to realise that it is lying still; out of that pitying love and redemptive passion whose springs are hid with Christ in God. Such movements cannot die, and to comment upon the present vigour and vitality of the West London Mission is not far short of an impertinence.

What of the man upon whom the mantle of Hugh Price Hughes has fallen? To get a clear-cut, four-square impression of him was never easy. In the early days, the great over-arching shadow of Hugh Price Hughes confused one's view. Of late, the picture of the man and his work etched into one's mind with convincing vigour by one of the most effective journalists of the day has impaired our judgment in another

sense. To be written up, even by the most sympathetic and reverent impressionist that ever wielded pen, means to be conventionalized, buried beneath a conception which rapidly hardens into a tradition, not to say a superstition, and brings the inevitable temptation to live up to one's portrait. A man may be more than strong enough to resist such a temptation in its explicit form; but such temptations are seldom explicit except to the vain and petty, and do their deadly work long before they are recognised. Public life is thronged with men who unconsciously live to prove the infallible insight and to fulfil the remarkable prophecies of their biographers and appreciators. And if writing up on this large and vivid scale is not too good for the man, it is even worse in its conventionalizing and stereotyping effect upon his work. But that is a question for the coming generation to tackle. Meanwhile Mr. Rattenbury has been first overshadowed, then over-exposed, and to catch his natural face in the mirror of one's appreciation is no easy matter.

On the face of it, his superb audacity marks him in the true succession to Mr. Hughes. Oak and triple brass must have girt the heart that could venture upon the Lyceum Theatre for Sunday services. Those who were present on the first Sunday evening have put it on record that the preacher suffered from an almost overwhelming stage-fright, which strikes one as the only possible attitude for a wise man in a situation which none but a blind fool would face with equanimity. The daring experiment soon justified itself, and to-day the great theatre is still crowded from roof to floor every Sunday evening. Why?

Certainly not because it is a theatre. A great deal of nonsense has been talked about the attractive effect of a theatrical building upon the man in the street, who fights shy of ecclesiastical structures and stiff pews. As a matter of fact, there is only one element of the population that is attracted by theatre services—the hopelessly poor and parasitic. Mr. Rattenbury himself was aware of this from the first. "Our services here are a success," he once said, "not because this is a theatre, but because it is the Lyceum —a place as famous in its way as St. Paul's or the British Museum." But the fame of the Lyceum can only account for a very small fraction of the success, after all.

Is it to be found, then, in the popular and sensational character of the service? To one who is on the lookout for the latest thing, whether in the free-and-easy, or in the dramatic and spectacular, type of service, a visit to the Lyceum will prove a sore disappointment. There is no clamour of strident voices against strident brass, no incontinent display of that obtuse and soulless hilarity which passes for spiritual joy in some quarters, no sensational feature of any kind. Freedom is not bought at the cost of dignity, and in the bid for souls the soul is not betrayed. The hymns are, for the most part, classics of the common Christian heart. The singing, led by a capable choir and orchestra, is unmarred by that vicious overemphasis with which a certain type of musical evangelism has infected much of our vocal praise. The whole service, while undeniably popular, in the sense of being easy to follow and legitimately attractive, achieves a certain distinction born of seriousness and reverence.

Or is it because the preacher is of the unconventional, un-parsonic type, which is supposed to be what the man in the street is waiting for? Nothing could be less unclerical than Mr. Rattenbury's habit. Correctly clerical in dress, his manner and temper correspond. And it is worth noting that of all Nonconformist ministers, the most clerical in dress and habit and the most naturally and easily in touch with the people is the Methodist minister. I once watched two ministers, a Congregationalist, clad in the most secular of lay garb (I remember his red and green tie) and an immaculately clerical Methodist, whose very buttons shrieked "Parson," enter a room full of people together. It took the former exactly twice the time to get *en rapport* with the crowd than the latter, in spite of his racy and unconventional remarks on a recent *Referee* article, and the Methodist's unashamed use of class-meeting phraseology. I pretend at no solution, but merely state a noteworthy and instructive fact. Mr. Rattenbury's habit is decidedly clerical, not to say "churchy," even for a Methodist. The cheap and swaggering fraternity that plays to the gallery is altogether outside his temperament; sincerity and dignity hold the balance in his sober and sympathetic speech.

Yet it is the preacher, and not any accident of place or attraction of ritual, that draws and keeps the crowd. That crowd, by the way, goes very far towards explaining Mr. Rattenbury's personality. While its fringes sweep the opposite poles of society, its body is made up of that safe and steady middle class which, in its impotent mediocrity and inertness, is the despair of the preacher. The impressionist

version of the West London Mission may magnify its romance and the lurid glory of its raids upon the ugly brute forces which trample down the souls and bodies of men. A truer vision sees its force and significance in the kindling and exalting of dull, purposeless, sterile lives, whose impotent respectability and conventional *morale* are a dead-weight and a menace to the religious life of the nation. He does not deliberately address himself to the ninety-and-nine. There are occasions when he flings himself against the man who is down, the woman who has got lost, and the seeing eye can watch the detrimental in the gallery wince and start. But in the end all distinctions are lost sight of, and conviction darts first of all to the prodigal who never left the Father's house, for the simple reason that he was never there in anything but a formal and external sense. Of the harrowing descriptions of the sinner's progress, which make up so much of what may be called journalistic preaching, and often serve far more to tickle the ears of the prurient onlooker than to grip the conscience of the prodigal, there is very little in his dignified, reasonable utterance. But of Christ there is very much. Again and again his theme is "The Unchanging Christ," and beneath an admirably popular treatment one can trace the hall-mark of the student and thinker.

Sometimes, indeed, a frankly theological turn reveals the centre of his interests. Thus an Easter sermon on "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" evoked a reference to Schweitzer's "Quest of the Historical Jesus," and what the preacher considered the vain endeavour of the historical school to confine to the Gospel narratives the universal Christ

who walks in the garden of every generation in different guise. The criticism is characteristic of Mr. Rattenbury. In his sharp realization that every age must have its own Christ, not because it invents Him, but because He still "leads the generations on" into a deeper knowledge of Himself, he sometimes tends to forget that this very conception of a universal Christ is largely due in our age to the nineteenth century quest of the historical Jesus. A universal Christ who is otherwise arrived at leaves no room for a West London Mission.

And at bottom Mr. Rattenbury realizes this, though he seems to have little patience with the minutiæ of historical criticism. I remember a striking and unexpected passage in the same sermon, in which the explicit, practical temper suddenly merged into the mystic's way of seeing. In that passage the preacher bore rapt witness to the presence of the Eternal Christ, not only in the souls of men, however broken and despised, but in the flowers, the sunlight, the quiet beauty of the countryside. With an all too rare sensitiveness to the world's beauty, he traced the love of Christ in the yellow sun-flood, His dream in the mystic meadows of the night, and His finger upon the tender green grass which is the hair of the earth. But suddenly, as if recoiling from some unspoken accusation of Pantheism, he swung back to the historic Cross. Not a phantom upon the blue hills of dream, but the crucified Jesus is the Soul of the world —He who met Magdalen and Peter and Thomas; He who was dead and is risen, and still bears upon His body the print of the nails.

Mr. Rattenbury is emphatically a strong preacher.

His manner spells competence, decision, and a firm grasp of things. His presentation is lucid and clear-cut; there are no ragged edges anywhere. He has not much feeling for style, and his sentences tend to be somewhat rough-hewn and not particularly well balanced: he wins by sheer driving power and momentum. At times the words come pelting at white heat and have the natural beauty of all swift and darting things. Popularity has not infected him with the anecdotal virus, and he has also escaped the Methodist habit of over-illustrating. A stern suppression of things which may interest the preacher, but can make no appeal to the average hearer, is very marked. Like most strong men, he can afford to let his emotions flow forth upon occasion. The first drop of his clear, fine voice from authority to tenderness surprises; afterwards it seems the most natural thing in the world. And if one were pressed to give the ultimate secret of his success, one might guess worse than finding it in that mingling of authority and sympathy which inspires more confidence and admiration in the bulk of men than any other combination of qualities, however brilliant or commanding.

III

Rev. FRANK BALLARD, M.A., D.D.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE LECTURER FOR THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CONFERENCE

"CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE" has no very alluring sound in these days in the ear of either sinner or saint. To the first it smacks of antiquated arguments reminiscent of Paley and Leslie, of would-be clever *impromptu* replies to objections which do everything except answer them, and, in general, of a clumsy kind of mental bullying. To the second it seems to degrade the lecturer from being a witness to august things to being a religious stump orator; from dealing with the deep and solemn doubts of the struggling soul to rebutting the cheap sneers of the Rationalist Press type of person. Thus it has come about that very few men of commanding gifts and fine Christian personality are giving themselves to the work of Christian Evidence, and the Church goes greatly impoverished in consequence. For it remains true that the bulk of people outside the Churches are strongly influenced by anti-Christian literature of the cheap and brutal variety, and for the Christian teacher to refuse to tackle this state of mind for fear of losing his dignity is as unreasonable as if a doctor were to refuse to tackle an ugly sore for fear of soiling his instruments. The modern minister is greatly in advance of his predecessors in his intimate acquaintance with what may be called the nobler and deeper

aspects of scepticism. He has studied most anti-Christian philosophies, has a fair knowledge of the principles and results of scientific research, and can deal with sweetly reasonable forms of agnosticism in a markedly skilful and sympathetic manner. The misfortune is that sweetly reasonable agnostics, melancholy sceptics and wistful doubters are not as common as some imagine. The average sceptic is neither reasonable nor sweet, but something of a bully, and, moreover, would not understand "Bishop Blougram's Apology," even if he could be induced to read it. What he does understand and appreciate is the Rationalist Press reprints and kindred literature, and his contempt for the parson who has not mastered these treasures of wisdom is profound and unmitigated. "You haven't read our books," is his unspoken cry to the pulpit; "what right have you to cram your opinion down our throats as if there were no other side?" To turn the pulpit into a controversial platform in response to this challenge would be fatal; but it indicates the supreme need for an informed and energetic Christian Evidence campaign on modern lines, in which not laymen but ministers must take the prominent part.

Dr. Ballard is a pioneer in this difficult and rewarding field. Long years of close and sympathetic study have made him master of every form and aspect of popular anti-Christian thought and propaganda. Already in his Brighton days, when he was making a reputation as a preacher of rare distinction, and had the care of a large and complex congregation, he had laid the foundation for his subsequent triumphs in dealing with hostile crowds. In those days he took a week-

night class meeting which he promptly transmogrified into a sermon discussion circle. There the sermon of the previous Sunday evening was handled with perfect freedom of speech and opinion, and this proved an invaluable means to the minister for getting acquainted with the real thoughts of his people. At that time already, the evening sermon was often followed by free and open discussion, to which large numbers of non-church-goers were attracted, and in which "Clarionettes" and other rough-and-ready sceptics took part with surprising orderliness and moderation. Sympathetic on-lookers prophesied distressing outbreaks of rowdyism, but the prophecy has remained unfulfilled to this day. While such a course would certainly be disastrous in the hands of many ministers, Dr. Ballard has conclusively proved that it is a means of grace in the hands of the right man, and one devoutly hopes that the twentieth century will see many "right" men who have not yet discovered their vocation follow his example.

To-day Dr. Ballard stands as the only ministerial Christian Evidence lecturer officially commissioned by a great Church, and this commission gives him an inestimable advantage over the lecturer connected with a "society" merely. It not only increases his influence with the non-church-going public, but it affords him an opportunity for giving object lessons to the membership of the Church itself. All over the country, churches are suffering from a paralysing depression. Both ministers and people are despairing of ever making any inroad upon the surrounding population. In not a few quarters sustained prayer for a revival of religion is tinged with despondency,

and almost harrowing in its cumulative and reiterative appeal to God to "send a revival." Dr. Ballard comes in and says, "To speak of 'a call to prayer' in your sense is the greatest heresy. Your prolonged prayer makes God out to be a rock of flint. Why will He not answer a petition so completely in accordance with His will? The fact is that what is wanted in this case is nothing from God at all, but everything from man. You are asking from God what you can be and do of yourselves, if you choose." And he points his words by filling the church on the very next Sunday evening with a rough and unaccustomed crowd. After the sermon he perhaps invites open discussion, though he does not follow this course in all cases. To the surprise of the saints in Zion, a large number of people remain (at the conventional "after-meeting" on the previous Sunday only twenty-five stragglers graced the area of the church). Unequivocal "Clarionettes" and Secularists open fire upon the preacher, are met with perfect courtesy and sympathy, and, taking their tone from his, speak with entire moderation and respect. The interest grows and deepens, and though these men have been in their places for three hours, they are loth to go. For the first time in their lives they have taken part in controversy in its worthiest sense; for the first time they have been shaken in their cocksure denials, set wondering if they have not been misled, impressed with a sense of the dignity of religion and of the claims of Christ upon their respect at least. During the week one or two lectures bring them crowding back to the church, and not a few seek opportunity for private conversation with this "new kind of parson."

His exhaustive acquaintance with every phase and detail of his subject, while it makes him the prince of lecturers, reacts upon his able and valuable books in a two-edged way. On the one hand, it makes them veritable arsenals for the would-be Christian controversialist and ideal gift books for the intelligent sceptic; on the other, it impairs their value as pieces of sustained argument and constructive thought. Even in writing a book, Dr. Ballard cannot keep the lecturer's platform out of view. He is for ever answering imaginary objections, rebutting possible counter-thrusts. His books bristle with quotations inserted with a definite class of objector in view; they have all the magnificent, concrete vigour, but also something of the inevitable occasionalism and one-sidedness of such apologetic. He has the wide knowledge and intellectual acumen for something more permanent and broadly constructive than he has as yet given us, and one looks forward to such a work from his pen in the future. But, after all, his intense and passionate preoccupation with Christian Evidence in the narrower and more specific sense is his biggest asset, without which he could not have accomplished his unique work.

A passionate sympathy with the perplexed, the struggling and the oppressed emerges in his utterance. His is the speech of one who has looked in the face of doubt, sat with perplexity, broken bread with sorrow, touched the brow of despair. He has the intense, sad manner of the man who has stared long at tragedy, and never tasted of the humour that lies hard by it as meat near the bone. A sense of humour, indeed, is the one thing he lacks, the one thing that would make him mighty where now he

is able. He takes life with desperate seriousness and with a certain lack of proportion. In one sense this is incurable because temperamental. In another sense a resolute turning away from earth's sorrows to the supreme and central agony of the Cross might make him smile tenderly over things he now laments passionately. Yet his very sombreness attracts strenuous, struggling souls. There are so few men acquainted with grief in our pulpits, so few men, that is, upon whom the acquaintance has left visible scars, and many a troubled soul which might feel itself mocked by a smile turns to that sad, weary face as to something kin and entirely sympathetic. He has strong likes and dislikes, has spent much time and energy in denouncing the smoking habit, has done not a little good in pointing out the weak and stupid sentimentality of many of our hymns, and has put much vigour and persuasiveness into his advocacy of the Revised Version for public reading. A touch of genius runs through everything he says—the genius of a strongly prehensile and assimilative mind and of a vividly intuitive soul. Narrowness is his, needless to say—the narrowness of the man who has allowed his work to become his master (one doubts if Dr. Ballard has ever played a game in his life); but breadth too—the breadth of him whose consuming motive and controlling purpose are to lay a helpful touch upon his fellow-men. He has brought scholarship, mental power, academic honour, vivid sensibility to a much undervalued and neglected task, and he is earning a rich reward, the larger and more glorious part of which must in the nature of things remain hidden—"until the harvest."

IV

Rev. HARRY BISSEKER, M.A.

TUTOR AT THE METHODIST THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, RICHMOND, LONDON

At the recent Students' Conference in Liverpool, Mr. Bisseker revealed something of the nerve-racking strain and of the heart-breaking sense of helplessness that had been his portion during the early days of the Leysian Mission. A grim little story gave point to his remarks. There were no labour bureaux in those days, and it was part of his problem to find work for the many unemployed who came about the Mission. One of these was a man who had once been a rabid opponent of Christianity, but had been induced to attend the services and, gradually sloughing his prejudices, had developed fine promise of Christian living. Twice Mr. Bisseker procured work for him, but on his falling out of employment through no fault of his own for the third time, all efforts to get him into work again failed, and he and his family were reduced to bitter want. One night, after having tramped about all day in a fruitless search, some old companions pressed him to have a drink. He had not had anything to eat for twenty-four hours, and his weakness made him an easy prey to temptation. No efforts to reclaim him availed, and when Mr. Bisseker heard of him last, this well-meaning man who had been on the verge of full Christian discipleship was serving a term in gaol. As he told his story

many a one in the Conference awoke for the first time fully to the brutal fact that it is possible for a man to starve in London without a single human being offering him a crust, but that there are always loafers ready to offer him a drink.

Mr. Bisseker has exchanged the strenuous round of the Central Mission for the more leisured pace of tutorial work, but human struggle and misery are among the most persistent spectres that haunt sensitive souls, and in hearing him preach for the first time one insensibly looks for certain deep lines which contact with wretchedness graves on a man's speech, though it may not leave them on his face. But whatever marks his Leysian experience may have scored upon him, they do not emerge. There is something refreshingly youthful and sanguine about his preaching; it has the appearance of a boy-face which will need years before the ruddy flesh shows the death's-head beneath. He delights to walk the green hill-tops of a genial spiritual experience, where the love of God is realised and understood in the clear light of happy family relationships, where the very Cross is clothed with soft grass, and small flowers grow out of its crimson nail-marks. Or he will take us into the warm lap of Divine comfort, to the haven we long for when, in the midst of manhood's battles, we suddenly feel very weak and small, and a craving comes upon us such as that which comes to the little child left alone in a big house and crying for its mother. At such times resolve, aspiration, even prayer, are beyond our strength. We only want home, for we are astray in our own lives and in our souls. And to this mood Mr. Bisseker ministers in a characteristi-

cally simple, genial way. He is pleasantly at home in this touching aspect of our manifold redemption. He has the gift of helpfulness, and of a lenient understanding for common frailties. He has the knack of sending the pathos of a simple story right home, and of quietly infusing strength and courage into jaded lives. It is what one might call a comforting ministry; it is not the strenuous, stringent call of the man who has looked naked grief in the face and lived.

In this Mr. Bisseker falls into line with the modern Methodist type, with its avoidance of the tragic note and its intimacy with the common difficulties and sorrows of average humanity. Nothing is more characteristic of the Methodist temper to-day than its intimate contact with the thoughts and feelings of the middle classes and its consummate knowledge of their affinities and needs. To enter the best type of Methodist church or Mission is to get an impression of perfect adequacy within a well-defined range. This, I think, is the strength of Methodism to-day. It seeks neither to be esoteric nor to adopt the popular catchwords of the hour, but, recognising its peculiar mission to men of average temperament and circumstance, has made itself master of their requirements, and ministers to them with practised and expert skill. In this also, one suspects, lies the weakness of Methodism as a Church. It stands largely for an appeal which certainly attracts earnest hearers, but does not tend to make Church members. So queerly is this human nature of ours made up that while the genial and comforting attracts us to draw from its sweetness, only the stern, the tragic and the heroic can ultimately win us to lifelong service and sacrifice.

It is not the love-feast that makes good soldiers of Jesus Christ; it is the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

There is nothing of the academic about Mr. Bisseker. He has, indeed, a good deal of the layman's attitude and immediacy of approach to eternal mysteries, and there is an attractive freshness and sparkle, something distinctly unsophisticated and direct about his utterance. Without any depth of interpretative insight, he has a gift—shall we say of transfiguration?—which invests rusty truisms with the rosy freshness of truth. Simple preaching most people would call it, adding that to preach like that is quite easy. So it is—to the man who has been the Superintendent of the Leysian Mission and looked sunward all the time. "Daylight preaching" expresses it best, perhaps, for its prevailing tones are the blue and gold of God's gracious day. There are rumblings of thunder, of course, harrowing winds and pregnant clouds; but the prevailing atmosphere is the clear, quiet sunshine which falls with like happiness upon the heart. A quiet, sympathetic voice; a glow of genuine warmth; much freedom and homeliness of illustration; above all, the gift of holding common things up to the light and making them sparkle: these go to make up preaching to which the common people listen gladly, and by which jaded hearts, dry and weary with many books and opinions, are refreshed.

And with all the freshness which suggests youth, Mr. Bisseker's preaching is essentially disciplined and mature. It has none of the young man's egoism, no lust for theological expression or personal explanation, no protrusion of individual preference or idiosyncrasy. It

is the utterance of a heart at leisure from itself, and wins by sheer singleness of intention and gentleness of persuasion. Neither startling nor showy, it is yet full of light and spiritual fragrance; kindly, engaging, sincere. He is particularly happy in his children's addresses, where his gift of homely description and his genial candour come most fully to their own.

His penchant for middle ways is sometimes a little disconcerting. Thus, in a sermon on "What Salvation Means," he says: "Take worldliness. We are always being told that worldliness is sinful. Why? 'Oh,' somebody says at once, 'because it means spending a lot of time in making money, and in pleasures that belong only to the present life.' But does not the best man you know spend a good deal of time in making money, and also in pleasures that belong to the present life? Does he not do so, not only with the approval of his conscience, but with the approval of yours?" To this not a few Christians would unhesitatingly oppose an emphatic No. The best man we know may be obliged to spend a good deal of, or even nearly all, his time in earning a living for himself and those dependent on him—such are the rigorous conditions of modern life;—but he cannot devote "a great deal" of what time remains to the pleasures of this life and still remain "the best man we know." Mr. Bisseker goes on to distinguish between the innocent and the wrongful enjoyment of pleasure, and depicts the good man as going along the line of harmless pleasure till God bids him stop, and then stopping where the worldling would defy God's warning. All this is admirably adapted to the pedestrian commonsense; but it is not easy to admit

it as a valid commentary upon Christ's "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself," which Mr. Bisseker has somewhat unfortunately chosen as his text. It still remains true that the man who has heard the call of Christ will, to put it mildly, not find quite so much time to devote to pleasure as his worldly neighbour. The root of the matter is that Mr. Bisseker, like so many of our young preachers, is over-anxious to find points of contact between Christ and the modern soul, and finds the chiefest in the raising and heightening of the world's best, in the infusing of a new spirit and motive into the genial occupations and amenities of life. All this is very pleasant, and, in a degree, both helpful and true; but it savours more of the discipleship that uses Christ as a means towards more refined happiness than of the discipleship that serves Christ and follows Him to the Cross. And human nature is always utilitarian and ever ready to welcome and approve what it calls a religion of common sense, something that really "works" and does not make fanatics and visionaries. That is why the school which Mr. Bisseker stands for is in danger of succumbing to its own success. But one suspects Mr. Bisseker himself is still *in via,* and these quiet green valleys are not his final destination. Meanwhile he is a preacher of persuasive appeal and winsome charm.

V

Rev. W. H. ARMSTRONG

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE EAST HAM CENTRAL METHODIST MISSION, LONDON

We are constantly being told that what keeps "the masses" (convenient term!) away from church is the extreme conventionality and dulness of our services. Given thoroughly popular and "untheological" hymns, the briefest and most unconventional of prayers, a not too reverent atmosphere and a straight, sparkling talk followed by open discussion, and the people will come. As a matter of fact, however, ultra-modern efforts after this pattern have invariably failed even from the numerical point of view, while such enterprises as the Central Methodist Missions, which, as a rule, adhere to the old lines, are crowded to the doors. Nothing could be less revolutionary than the average evening service at a typical Methodist Mission. With very few exceptions, the hymns are of the orthodox and classical order, free alike from evangelistic jauntiness and modern non-committal. The prayers are not conspicuously short, and have much of the old-time devoutness and fervour. There is always an excellent choir, it is true, reinforced by an orchestra more often than not; but the solitary anthem is again generally of the orthodox ecclesiastical type. The sermon is not a talk or a popular lecture, but a sermon—solemn, explicit, urgent, with the spiritual end kept in view from first to last. There

is no opportunity for discussion—an inquirer proposing to "discuss" would, one suspects, find he has come to the wrong place. Yet the people come in large numbers and feel thoroughly happy and at home. Of course, the secret is not in the form of service at all, as our theorist would have us believe, but in the spirit and atmosphere of the place. Methodist Mission workers have a knack of making every comer realise that he counts; that he is not a unit in a crowd, but an individual object of interest and concern. The trouble with the theorist is that he talks of "the masses" when he ought to be talking of the man next door. True, to discuss individuals does not lend itself to that epic treatment which goes so well with padded armchairs and the post-prandial pipe. Yet it so happens that since the days of the Good Shepherd the flock has ever been gathered into the fold one by one and not *en bloc;* and the worst that can be said of the modern Church is that she is in too great a hurry to call her sheep by name. She has, largely through the influence of a pseudo-scientific spirit, lost the patient art of fishing for men; she even seems to show a thinly veiled contempt for so slow and primitive a method. And just as the psychological abstraction called "the child" has frequently betrayed the immature young teacher into an absolute incapacity for understanding actual children, so our preoccupation with that vague and formless nebulosity we call "the masses" is tending to incapacitate us for dealing with actual men. One feels tempted, indeed, to lay it down that the person who has made a special study of the masses generally does not know a man when he sees him. At any rate it is true that the churches

which have the firmest hold upon the people are not the churches which have any very laborious and elaborate theories on the subject of reaching the masses, but those that address themselves intelligently and sympathetically to the needs of this or that particular man or group of men living in this or that particular district. It may sound a little unscientific and early Victorian to sophisticated ears, but it has one great advantage—it is eminently effectual.

It is the family atmosphere at the East Ham and similar Missions that is the focus of attraction. To those reared in colder spiritual and social latitudes, the reiterative hand-shaking, which is counted a means of grace in Methodism, more often than not appears in the light of a somewhat disconcerting ordeal; but the great masses of the people are won by warmth of personal contact, by a breath of home. Deep down in their battered hearts is a wistful yearning for the simple brotherliness and warm goodwill that are so rare in a selfish, grinding city. To come into a place where eyes brighten because of his coming, and where his hand is held in a strong grip of comradely trust and sympathy, means more to many a rough, toil-hardened man than we can guess. The Methodist Mission has exploited this valuable point of contact to the full. At the East Ham Mission, for instance, they have made a fine art of welcoming the visitor without any undue fuss or the slightest suspicion of impertinent prying. On my arrival there a worker tried to make me feel at home, and did it with the perfection of artless tact: no one, whatever his rank or upbringing, could have felt offended at her courteous solicitude. In the morning, needless to say, the service bears the

family character; but even in the evening there are sufficient members of the household of faith present to give a warm spiritual tone to the proceedings, and insensibly affect the visitor with their own genial fervour. One instinctively feels that the preacher is being carried by the prayers and sympathy of the large inner circle. In only too many churches he lacks this strategic advantage, standing practically alone against a curious and critical audience; but here the Christian ideal that not the preacher only, but the Church behind him, is to be the messenger of the Gospel, is largely realised.

Mr. Armstrong has got a firm grip of East Ham. Coming to the Great Central Hall one broiling Sunday morning, when the depressing influences of steamy heat and an apparently interminable strike were combining to keep weak and harassed folk in their beds, I found not the mere handful of faithful disciples that I had expected, but a wide-awake and earnest audience sufficiently large to make the whole great building appear full at first sight, only a second deliberate glance revealing a few vacant seats here and there. Like most successful Methodist preachers, Mr. Armstrong gives plain people the kind of truth they can understand, and in the language they can understand. He is immune from the vice of talking over the heads of his audience; his contact with his people is too practical and intimate to leave room for any ignorance of their mental capacity and habits. His appeal is palpable and immediate. There is no subtlety. His very voice, with its characteristically Methodist intonation and its capacity for emotional expression, makes for popular sympathy.

Thoroughly pragmatic, he will never be likely to take so wide a view as to see nothing at all; and while he will always "hitch his wagon to a star," he will take care that it is not a shooting one, and show a decided preference for fixed planets of the first or second magnitude. To this extent he is in a line with the average "people's man"—the man who has a rough but inerrant instinct for the practically effective and an assured mastery over the limited and somewhat brassy gamut of popular emotion and appeal.

But over and behind this useful endowment is a sensitive and eager mind which will never be content with lip-wisdom and the trick of apt quotation and allusion. One divines a man who has not a little of the student's instincts, who loves books for themselves, not only for what they may yield of pulpit grist. One divines, too, behind his practicality a genuinely mystic strain, the flame of that profound interior life that cannot be altogether hid, but must needs flicker in and out between the well-knit meshes of his practical and pertinent utterance. There is not only that general modern sense of things, which a man must have nowadays if he is to preach the eternal Gospel to the mind of to-day; there is also a constant though never obtrusive effort to lift the eyes of his congregation to those far blue hills of thought and vision towards which his own are ever set, and to bring to them a breath of that larger air for which his own spirit pants. To square this ardent, outleaping love of mental adventure with the stern limits and exigencies of popular preaching cannot always be easy, and occasionally one catches a hint of the inevitable

strife between the two tendencies; only a fleeting allusion, perhaps, apt enough but clearly belonging to a level differing widely from that of the rest of his sermon. For the rest, Mr. Armstrong has developed both the strong and the weak points of his type to a marked degree. Thus he lacks suggestiveness almost entirely, but has that clear-cut explicitness that makes a quick bid for his particular constituency. He has the graphic, moving style—there is nothing static or abstract in either thought or presentation. He has also the vice of overmuch quotation, almost invariably towards the end of a discourse. Gathering passion for the climax, he sometimes blurs his desired effect by an avalanche of popular quotations, ranging from Tennyson to the Methodist Hymn-book, each of them effective enough in itself, but coming too much in crowds to hit the mark. One doubts if the general practice of working up towards a final climax—quotations or no quotations—is not a vicious one. The hearer is exhausted by the time, and where one final searching sentence, perhaps a pointed question, might clinch the message for good, an oratorical climax blurs rather than fixes the impression. But these are defects peculiar not to one man but to a large class of effective preachers, and in that class Mr. Armstrong, who is still a young man, stands in the foremost rank. A preacher who is able to gather his thousands Sunday night after Sunday night in a district like East Ham, is one who should go far along his own effective lines. One doubts if there is any man in Methodism to-day who excels him in attracting and appealing force.

VI

Rev. R. MOFFAT GAUTREY

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE METHODIST CENTRAL MISSION, NOTTINGHAM

NOWHERE has the old order changed with more sweeping effect than in Methodism. Looking back to the Methodism one knew as a child, the gulf between the old and the new seems stupendous. To young people bred in a colder and more formal ecclesiastical atmosphere the old Methodist chapel was exciting as a fairy tale. The Methodist manner of praying and preaching, with its inimitable unction, overwhelming emphasis, elongation of vowels, groaning italics and agonising appeals, was a fearful and uncanny joy to us in the days of our youth, and reached an almost ecstatic climax when we saw a "sinner" go up to the penitent form. A backslider was always welcome, but nothing near so thrilling as the sight of a real sinner. The sectional headings in the hymn-book were also a perennial beguilement to us in those days. It was curiously stirring to read about Believers Rejoicing, Trusting, Suffering, Praying, Seeking for Full Redemption, Fighting, Watching, and in Communion with God, not to speak of those headings setting forth the difference between Formal and Inward Religion, or addressing themselves to Mourners, Backsliders, and other persons round whom our youthful imagination wove a highly coloured web of romance.

Then there were the ministers and their families. The advent of a new Methodist minister evoked a delicious excitement To go careering all over the world like a gipsy and yet be accounted respectable and even saintly was a wonder to us, and the dilapidated and happy-go-lucky condition of the Methodist manse made it a delightful place to visit. But best of all were the manse children, who had generally assimilated a glorious variety of interesting naughtinesses culled from many schools and playgrounds, and were always most amiably ready to exhibit them for our edification.

Time has made very radical havoc with all this. To-day the visitor to a Methodist church listens in vain for any but very occasional and abortive groanings, and where the after-meeting has not entirely disappeared, the penitent form has almost wholly given place to the quiet talk in the vestry or inquiry-room. The headings are still in the hymn-book, but there is little talk about the things they stand for. Methodists have, to a large extent, been caught up in the general tendency towards a chaste reticence on the subject of Christian experience; and while such reticence is a desirable thing, one sometimes wonders if a great deal that passes for it is not merely due to the fact that there is not very much there to talk about. Manse life has changed, too; the old, somewhat haphazard way has given place to a tame and average orderliness, and Methodist manse children are as decorous as most of their neighbours. The style of preaching has changed, of course, down to the tone of voice. The typical Methodist manner is becoming rare, and there is a tendency to rattle

services off like an agenda, and to talk either racy market-place English or genial literature in the pulpit. Young ministers are either of a pensive, bookish turn, or else fling themselves with sturdy commonsense into modern religious and social movements. Even at the great Central Missions the preaching is of a mediating rather than of a prophetic order.

Yet certain fundamental Methodist traits remain unobliterated. There is, for instance, that peculiar smoothness and tact which only an itinerant ministry can produce. In sheer adaptability and *savoir faire* the average Methodist minister can give points to most of his brethren in other Churches. There is also a high degree of pulpit adroitness, a knack of setting forth one's mental possessions in the most effective and engaging way, and of finding a short-cut to the intelligence and sympathies of the average congregation. This power of effectively handling his stock-in-trade gives the Methodist preacher a tremendous pull over almost every other type. Whatever knowledge he has is portable and readily available, and his varied experience has sharpened his instinct for finding the best method of approach to almost any type of mind. *Mutatis mutandis*, this practical "cleverness" was characteristic of his predecessor in a slightly different way, and its present modernised form is in the true Methodist succession.

Mr. Moffat Gautrey is of the best modern Methodist type. He is an ideal Central Mission superintendent, can run a heterogeneous team of workers without a hitch, and has the art of saying any strong, stern things that need to be said in a most ingratiating

manner. Dressed, like most Methodists, in immaculately clerical attire, it is yet the man and not the parson that looks at one out of those keen, straight eyes of his, and a "Brotherhood" type of man at that—the kind to which Tom, Dick, and Harry have not much difficulty in cottoning. One need hardly be told that Mr. Gautrey is one of the most successful Brotherhood leaders in the country, and that he can link his mixed multitude of men up to the church machinery in an almost magic way. Other ministerial leaders, equally gifted or even more so, complain that they cannot get their Brotherhoods to do anything for the church, that they only come to the meetings for what they can get and chiefly to be entertained. Mr. Gautrey's experience has been far otherwise. Something about his magnetic personality and straight, forthright way of tackling men and things and, perhaps even more, his wholehearted, generous abandonment to the movement, has gripped the men wherever he was placed. At Liverpool he had a sturdy battalion of five hundred who would have followed him to the mouth of hell, to quote his own words. At Bootle the Brotherhood put in a new church organ for him. At Nottingham his Brotherhood is his mainstay, as responsive to him as his Church membership, and well to the fore in whatever work is going. He has disproved the theory that the men can only be held by the kind of talk that gives plenty of scope for cheering and laughter. Again and again he reasoned with these motley crowds concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, and the prophesies of hostility and dismemberment remained unfulfilled.

Mr. Gautrey is dowered with the ideal temperament for appealing to the masses. He has all the practicality and immediacy that make for instant success. There is nothing subtle or fine-spun about his mental equipment, and he neither tilts against windmills nor finds it necessary to prove his prophetic calling by always being "agin the government." On the other hand, his unquenchable optimism is of a sober, reflective type, and he can say some very scathing things about the multitudinous forms of Jingoism from which average humanity suffers. There is something reassuringly reliable about his air and address. He looks a man who would keep a promise and not be likely to lose his train or be late for anything. One would imagine that his watch always kept the right time, and that he would be able to tell one exactly when Easter will fall next year. He is of the type that grips the crowd—a man who sees things squarely and can hit out straight from the shoulder, but who is also not ashamed of showing that he has a heart and is capable of ordinary, warm human sentiment. He has made himself master of his constituency, knows its every idiosyncrasy, and studies to win its favour without truckling to its meaner self. Such men are not heard of in the ranks of academic and ecclesiastical distinction. They have no time for over-much reading, nor are they interested in Church government, as a rule. But they have what is a rarer distinction in these days: absolute competency for their task and the most perfect adaptation and adjustment to it. They fill their places with the dignity of complete fitness, are frankly popular without surrendering to compromise or dishonour.

As a preacher, Mr. Gautrey scores by many acceptable qualities. He has a resonant, sympathetic voice, considerable eloquence, an easy command of language, and the Methodist turn for illustration. Sometimes he indulges in pure rhetoric; then, suddenly veering round, he will deal a square blow at some crying evil in the plainest and freest of everyday English, or make for the heart with some bit of quiet human pathos. His electric energy quickly pierces through the outer wall of secondary attention, and captures the inmost fastness of the mind. The most casual hearer is arrested by the sheer purposefulness of it all. As he would put it, that man is out to do something. Mr. Gautrey certainly lives in a world where things really happen. He is no dreamer. If those shrewd, tenacious eyes of his ever knew how to dream, they have lost the trick in the toss and tumble of city work. That resolute closure of the lips was not learnt in some ivory tower of fancy. Every look and word spells realism, decisiveness, precision of aim. Though his work has left him little time for close study, he has read to purpose, and can use what he has read with telling effect. Like every true Methodist, he has an easy, natural homiletic gift, and can always be relied upon for clear divisions and key-words that really help a willing memory. Sometimes he gets hold of an illustration which makes itself rather than its subject memorable; and folk go away remembering "that lovely story" and forgetting the text, just as some of us wend our way to Calvary and can remember only the little rock-flower that grew on the road-side and the blue bird that sang on the thorn. But for the most

part he gets there by the most direct route, and in this directness and sheer power of intention is his strength. He is a born fighter; every now and again a sudden glint in his eye betrays the passion of his convictions. And deepest of all, in spite of an entire absence of emotional excitement, he has the true Methodist quality—that indefinable spiritual particle which links George Jackson to John Wesley, that concentrated evangelistic plangency which makes the soberest of modern Methodist services a revival-meeting in disguise.

Read April 8, 1940
Cyrus M. Rothermel

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